PARTNERS
Improving Lives. Strengthening Communities.

July 19, 2018

Rutherford County Board of Commissioners
289 N. Main Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

Dear Rutherford County Commissioners:

I thank you for the opportunity over the last several months to continue to work with you and county leadership during your due diligence in seeking the best fit for ensuring the highest quality behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability services to citizens of Rutherford County. The process of review, which began long before the 60 day comment period started, has been complicated by the misleading and distorted information that has been generated from Asheville.

Throughout this process, Partners has maintained that we intend to take the "high road" and we have honored that pledge. We have met with numerous individuals in the county to discuss the significant, unmet challenges facing residents in the county. As we do in all of our counties, we have dialogued with elected officials, community non-profit groups, service providers, recipients of services, and community stakeholders to hear what they want in a system of care and to discuss personally, what we do and how we do it. We have not relied on the work of any out of area, expensive public relations firm to develop promotional materials to tell a narrative we want to present. During this time, we have maintained our commitment to Partners values, our commitment to integrity, and our commitment to ensuring consumers of services are the first and foremost driver of conversations and decisions. I believe the contrast from that to the conduct, activities, and actions of Vaya has been stark over the past two months, as well as informative for county citizens, leaders and elected officials.

As you continue to exercise your statutorily protected rights to align the county with the program of your choice, even with the interference from those who have attempted to sabotage the process and prevent your exercise of fair and deliberate due diligence, I encourage you to examine what makes best sense for the county now and into the future. If you decide that Partners is the best fit, we welcome the continued conversations and the opportunity to develop a transitional process that meets the needs of Rutherford County residents. If you elect to not transition but to remain aligned

with Vaya Health, we hope that Vaya continues the attention they have suddenly begun to give you during the last couple of months.

As I have mentioned to several of you and to the manager in recent weeks, the county has so much to build upon, most importantly a committed elected body, county leadership team, provider community, passionate families, and an excellent group of committed local leaders who share a vision of making Rutherford County the best it can be for all residents. I hope that you find the Local Management Entity/ Managed Care Organization that shares that commitment in the future to partner with local citizens to realize your vision.

Sincerely,

W. Rhett Melton
CEO

Kim Aldridge

From: Partners in Rutherford Co. <Partners.Rutherford@partnersbhm.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 4:54 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Partners' Letter to Providers - for public comment submission - unencrypt
Attachments: Partners Letter to Providers - Rutherford County Disengagement 062018.pdf; Fact Sheet Rutherford County Disengagement - Providers 062018.pdf

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Mr. Garrison,

In the spirit of transparency, Partners would like to include our communication with Rutherford County providers in the public comments submissions that you are gathering in regards to the LME/MCO Disengagement Process. Please find attached the letter and fact sheet which were emailed last week. Should you have any questions, or need any further information, please reach out to us. Thank you.

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PARTNERS

Improving Lives. Strengthening Communities.

June 14, 2018

Dear Providers,

Recently, Rutherford County voted unanimously to pursue disengagement from its current LME/MCO Vaya Health and realign with Partners (for details, please visit www.rutherfordcountync.gov). The due diligence period of accepting public comment is currently ongoing and ends on or around June 19, 2018. Vaya has recently shared your name and contact information with Rutherford County, making this letter possible.

Changes of any type are common in this industry, but often bring with them questions and/or concerns from all of those who are impacted. This disengagement process, in particular, has caused a significant amount of misinformation to be circulated.

In keeping with our values of transparency and partnership, we have created the attached fact sheet to ensure that you have the most accurate information regarding Partners' commitment to you, the providers serving or wanting to serve the consumers of Rutherford County. At Partners, we know that our success is significantly dependent on your success and that we are in this together.

We encourage you to connect with us directly to learn more about us and our objectives going forward. Caution should be used in relying on what others say about Partners plans or intents. For more information about Partners, please contact us directly and/or take a moment to view our website at www.partnersbhm.org and www.partnersbhm.org/transparency. Also, check our Provider-specific website at www.providers.partnersbhm.org/ which contains links to Provider Bulletins, Forums, Training, Partners Provider Manual and more.

Imperative throughout this process that touches us all at varying degrees and in varying ways is to remember our shared mission: care to the citizens we serve. It is critical that they be provided with accurate and truthful information throughout this process. To do otherwise would be inappropriate and unacceptable on any and all levels.

Thank you for what you do every day for the citizens in the communities you serve. We look forward to "partnering" with you in Rutherford County.

Sincerely,

W. Rhett Melton, CEO

Corporate Office
901 South New Hope Rd.
Gastonia, NC 28054

Elkin Region Office
200 Elkin Business Park Dr.
Elkin, NC 28621

Hickory Region Office
1985 Tate Blvd. SE, Suite 529
Hickory, NC 28602

1-888-235-HOPE (4673) • www.PartnersBHM.org

Fact Sheet: Proposed Rutherford County Realignment – Provider Information

June 14, 2018

PROVIDERS

- Partners has a philosophy of a broad provider network, ensuring choice and access for consumers in the county and welcomes all providers who are in good standing with state minimum requirements.
- Providers currently credentialed and contracted through Vaya to provide services to Rutherford County residents that wish to join the Partners network will be enrolled in the Partners network through a seamless, expedited process.
- Providers who are not currently credentialed and contracted through Vaya and wish to join the Partners network and provide services to Rutherford County residents will be expedited through an abbreviated application and credentialing process to ensure a timely entrance to the network once requested.
- Providers who are already in the Partners network and wish to provide services in Rutherford County will work through their current assigned Provider Network Account Specialist to add additional sites to their current contract.

MEDICAID RATES

- Partners has affirmed that in any instance where the currently published Medicaid rate is higher through Vaya, Partners will match the higher Vaya rate. (This includes Community Living and Supports and Respite for Innovation Recipients among others.)
- Furthermore, where Partners rate is higher than Vaya's, Partners will pay the higher rate resulting in an increase in reimbursement for those services to current service providers.
- Upon analysis of rate differences, we estimate that Partners pays approximately $2M more annually for services than we would if we applied all of Vaya's currently published rates to our service array and volume of services.
- Rates that are increased prior to or during this transition will be ongoing and not be limited to the contract period.

SERVICES

- Partners is committed to ensuring continuity of care for all Rutherford County consumers. Any Medicaid services being offered by Vaya in Rutherford County that are not currently in the Partners service array will be added to Partners prior to the date of engagement with Partners

by the county. This includes two services which have been the most mentioned during the due diligence period:

- Long Term Community Supports is a service offered to those enrolled in the Innovations Waiver. Partners has received approval to provide this unique service but has not launched it throughout our network. We anticipate that this will be actively used well before a transition into Rutherford County. Partners is dedicated to ensuring that Rutherford County consumers receiving this service will experience no lapse in care.
- Intercept is a service provided by Youth Villages for DSS clients. Not only is Youth Villages currently in our provider network for the Partners area, but we also maintain a unique relationship with each of our county DSS organizations. We are confident in our ability to ensure continuity for this service as well. In fact, Partners currently provides similar interventions within our service array and we intend to have the Intercept service in place no later than the time of transition. Consumers will have the benefit of continuity of the Intercept program and the addition of the unique services Partners will bring to the community providing enhanced service availability.

- Partners offers several services that Vaya does not currently offer in their service array. Partners intends to collaborate with consumers, providers and stakeholders in the community to add those services to the array available to Rutherford County citizens as applicable and appropriate.
- Partners has agreed to honor all Vaya authorizations to consumers for the same or similar services at the time of transition. If Partners can obtain the service authorizations directly from Vaya, there will be nothing required of providers to ensure this continuity. If Partners is unable to obtain the service authorizations from Vaya, we will request that all providers submit their service authorization approval letters to Partners to ensure continuity.

DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS

- On April 9, 2018, Rutherford County Board of County Commissioners voted to announce its intent to disengage from Vaya Health and engage with Partners. The required "letters of intent" were issued April 12, 2018. There are reports that the decision to begin the disengagement process from Vaya was made with no input or research. That is not true. Rutherford County leadership, including health care leaders, not only did preliminary research, but continues to take comments from the community and stakeholders.
- With few exceptions, disengagement is a minimum 9-month process which begins with issuance of these letters of intent. It was an announcement, not a final decision.
- The due diligence period continued on April 18, 2018 when Rutherford County posted its Disengagement Plan online, requesting public comment for at least 60 days. Additional requests for feedback were also made by the County through various traditional modes. The comment period ends on or about Tuesday, June 19, 2018. Official comments are made to the County as instructed at www.rutherfordcountync.gov, where they will be posted for a minimum of 30 days

following the comment period. We are aware of conflicting information on documents and websites that encourage comments to be sent to other destinations. However, we encourage interested respondents to use the directions promulgated by North Carolina rule and communicated by Rutherford County leadership to ensure their voices are heard.

- Once the County completes its review of comments, materials and other relevant information -- including advice from a transition team the County created – commissioners will formally decide whether to continue with the disengagement. If so, they will approve required plans and submit them and other documents to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Secretary. The Secretary will have 90 days to approve or deny the County's decision based on legal, written criteria. If approved, a transition date will be determined and communicated to all relevant parties. It is likely that the realignment would not be effective until January 2019.

Kim Aldridge

From: Andrew Walsh <lawwalsh@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 5:12 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Rutherford County LME/MCO realignment

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Dear Commissioners:

Please accept this public comment from a non-resident in my personal capacity. While I have worked for 3 LME/MCOs over the past many years, including a short temporary stint with Smoky Mountain Center and currently with Partners, this comment is entirely personal. Do not attribute it to anyone but me, please. I was not asked to send it and did not vet it with anyone before submitting.

I have been with Partners for about 5 years now. Of all the LME/MCOs, and really all of my prior employers, Partners is by far the most transparent, ethical, client-focused organization in my experience. What you have been experiencing during this process from Partners is truly Partners' nature, from top leadership down. Collaboration. True, regular and meaningful -- usually face-to-face -- engagement with consumers, providers, county leadership, and stakeholders. Dialogue, not diatribe or monologue. Top performance and quality. Caring staff. A willingness to embrace problems, work together toward solutions, and to grow as a self-professed and perpetually learning organization. And above all, to act with honesty, respect and professionalism.

Partners has taken its traditional honored position of staying above the fray and avoiding speaking ill of anyone, collaborating and helping instead when asked and however possible. Meanwhile, I struggle as an attorney of nearly 30 years, including as litigator, to remain as unshaken or restrained. Fighting injustice is in my blood and staying quiet is not. So I have read and watched with dismay as Vaya has spent precious taxpayer dollars and untold resources to not only wage a campaign of opposition, but to do so with bias, misinformation and vitriol. I will resist listing all the falsehoods and deceptions here, but draw your attention to certain themes:

1. Fear, Deception and Diversion: From the letter to consumers, to the website Vaya created, to the brochures mailed to all of the County's residents, Vaya in only two months has used significant precious funding to intimidate consumers and providers into opposing the realignment. This has been done by fanning the natural fear of the unknown or of change, and of creating or spinning misinformation. In some cases, persons remained silent or commented only anonymously out of fear of retaliation should Vaya stay the County's LME/MCO. Rutherford County gives Vaya about $100k per year; how many dollars did Vaya use to usurp and manipulate this process in comparison? Worse, Vaya has sought to divert comments away from the county and to Raleigh, instead. To my limited knowledge, at no time did Vaya offer to provide information to the County to assist in its process.
2. Interfere with County Rights: Rather than help the county reach an appropriate decision through collaboration, Vaya has sought to thwart the county's almost absolute statutory right to choose its own LME/MCO. See NCGS 122C-115(a3) which is rather simple and straightforward:

> (a3) A county that wishes to disengage from a local management entity/managed care organization and realign with another multicounty area authority operating under the 1915(b)/(c) Medicaid Waiver may do so with the approval of the Secretary. The Secretary shall adopt rules to establish a process for county disengagement that shall ensure, at a minimum, the following:
> (1) Provision of services is not disrupted by the disengagement.

(2) The disengaging county either is in compliance or plans to merge with an area authority that is in compliance with population requirements provided in G.S. 122C-115(a) of this section.
(3) The timing of the disengagement is accounted for and does not conflict with setting capitation rates.
(4) Adequate notice is provided to the affected counties, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the General Assembly.
(5) Provision for distribution of any real property no longer within the catchment area of the area authority.

The NC General Assembly spoke rather clearly: If a county "wishes to disengage" and realign, it "may do so" provided it follows a simple process overseen by the NCDHHS Secretary. The decision belongs to the county. The Secretary ensures the process for doing so is followed. Yet, before the county has even finalized a decision and submitted a formal request to disengage and realign, efforts were made and continue to be made to lobby the Secretary against the county.

3. Misrepresent the Process: When convenient, opponents have referred to the county's actions as a final decision -- even as those opponents participate in this comment period and the very due diligence process opponents say does not exist. Sadly, many have been mislead to believe that the April 9 resolution and later letters of intent and disengagement plan were final decisions. They were not. They were announcements that the process had started and transparent sharing of the proposed plan.

4. Misrepresentation of Available Information: Vaya and opponents have faulted the County for not contacting all county citizens receiving Vaya services. ***Yet only Vaya has that contact information.*** While using that protected health information under HIPAA for Vaya's own mailings and uses, Vaya has not given that same info to the County. The County cannot directly contact Vaya's consumers without Vaya's help. Likewise, the County has been at the mercy of Vaya in identifying and contacting providers in Vaya's network. Vaya created a lack of information and connection and then has used it against the County and to Vaya's sole advantage.

5. Misuse of Data: Mark Twain has said that "Facts are stubborn, but statistics are more pliable." He has also included statistics as the ultimate type of lie in a colorful phrase I'll not repeat here. Some opponents for this realignment have used selective "data" and statistical metrics without citation or full context, to "show" Vaya is superior to Partners. Almost none of it was as to Rutherford County specifically, but to Vaya's 23 counties on average. The presumption is that good data for Vaya is good data for Rutherford. That is not necessarily true, and the failure to give breakdown county-specific information is telling. Candidly, Partners has stellar performance measures in a variety of areas, comparable or better than Vaya. Vaya has some comparable or better than Partners. The importance, meaning, and reliability of those statistics cannot be followed by selective, uncited sound bites. More importantly, there is no scorecard for a decision like this. Must a county make a decision on an LME/MCO based on numbers, and if so, which ones? What is the process for gathering *all* of those numbers, including the assumptions and context that give them any meaning? If the numbers are comparable, but one LME/MCO is more engaging, collaborative and reliable, should the numbers trump that alignment in style, values and vision the county shares? Obviously not.

6. Destabilization Defense: Vaya has today taken language from a March NCDHHS bulletin that approved another county's transition as argument that the Secretary will find, even before the application is submitted, that a realignment is destabilizing to the state system. Vaya does not show the April bulletin where that language was left off. Moreover, there is nothing destabilizing to the whole state for Rutherford County to realign with Partners. In fact, with Medicaid Transformation coming to LME/MCOs within the next few years, now is the best time to make this decision. Telling someone to do nothing because a storm is coming is not necessarily sound advice.

Again, these our my personal opinions, written quickly on the last day of comment. I hope they help and are attributed to me and me only. I thank the County for its consideration of all comments and its willingness to follow the legal process despite any distractions and obstacles. I see similarities between Rutherford County and Partners in values and vision and hope they will be able to work together as partners in the near future.

Andrew M. Walsh, MBA, JD*
401 Hawthorne Lane, Ste.110-196
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amw27@cornell.edu (a.k.a. lawwalsh@bellsouth.net)

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*Licensed NC, GA, SC, TN

Kim Aldridge

From: Rachel Hensley <ncgeneralstore@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 4:26 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: LME/MCO Realignment

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Dear Rutherford County Commissioners

Please reverse your decision to change from Vaya Health to Partners Behavior. For seven years I worked as a caregiver in a group home so I am familiar with some of the issues. Changing "horses" in midstream appears to be an expensive and complicated switch. Why vote for this change with no advance notice to the public and the parties involved? Why make this change except for some political and unsavory financial goals?

I call on the Rutherford County Commissioners to reverse this questionable decision. I urge the state officials to block this change from Vaya Health to Partners Behavior.

Regards,
J. Robert Hensley
639 E Main Street
Spindale, NC 28160
828-828-0961

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Kim Aldridge

From: Rachel Hensley <ncgeneralstore@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 4:04 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: LME/MCO Realignment

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To Rutherford County Commissioners

I am writing in support of staying with Vaga Health. Changing to Partners Behavior seems like an unnecessary and destabilizing change. The fact that this proposed move was voted on with little or no notice makes it appear to be a political and financial gambit.

Please vote to reverse this change. I urge the state officials to block this switch.

Sincerely yours,

Rachel Hensley
639 E Main Street
Spindale, NC 28160
828-429-2118

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Kim Aldridge

From: Jeanne Duncan <jduncan@rhanet.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 3:16 PM
To: mental health realign
Attachments: PAC Letter to Commissioners (003).docx

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I have been asked to submit this letter of comment on behalf of the Vaya Provider Advisory Council regarding the disengagement of Rutherford County from Vaya Health. Thank you.

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June 18, 2018

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is to relay the views and recommendations of the Provider Advisory Council (PAC) for Vaya regarding Rutherford County's April 9th resolution to disengage from Vaya Health.

Vaya's Provider Advisory Council represents 575 providers from the 23 counties Vaya serves, including Rutherford County. The council provides input, feedback and guidance from the service provider's perspective. Our PAC is composed of voting members and participants from provider agencies, Vaya's Consumer and Family Advisory Committee, hospital systems and Community Care of North Carolina and licensed independent practitioners. We are proud to be part of Vaya's network, and we are proud to serve the residents of Rutherford County.

Some of the providers in Vaya's network are also in other MCO networks, including MCOs that are currently involved in an active disengagement process in another part of the state. Despite the best efforts of all parties involved, the process is complex and fraught with challenges. Unfortunately, those challenges may result in a disruption of services and have a direct negative impact on residents. As you evaluate your options we respectfully ask you to consider the following:

- make certain that a process of due diligence is completed so that Rutherford County is able to make the best decision going forward on behalf of the consumers and families of behavioral health services who are also citizens of Rutherford County;
- make certain that consumers and consumer families are not harmed in any manner by this process prior to, during or after as this due diligence process occurs;
- and, make certain that consumers and consumer families are not harmed in any manner if the disengagement does occur.

We appreciate your consideration and efforts to ensure that the residents of Rutherford County have satisfaction and stability in their behavioral health care.

Sincerely,

Provider Advisory Council for Vaya Health

CC: Dr. Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

Kim Aldridge

From: Frank Zachary <czachary@yadtel.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 10:20 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Rutherford County joining Partners

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To the Manager and Board Of Commissioners of Rutherford County,
I am a County Commissioner from Yadkin County and I am proud to be a member of the Partners Board of Directors. I cannot comment of VAYA, but I can state that Partners is an organization that sincerely dedicated to serving its population in the highest form possible and meeting their needs. All the while, recognizing its role as a public entity expending taxpayer money. Our leadership is transparent and focused on their assigned duties. I am continually impressed with our leadership and staff. I am pleased that Rutherford County is interested in aligning with Partners. I know of no one on our Board that is opposed to Rutherford County becoming part of our catchment area. As a County Commissioner, I recognize this is a big step. I am convinced that it will be a decision that you will be pleased to have made.

Thanks,
Frank C. Zachary

Frank C. Zachary, Attorney
Frank C. Zachary, PLLC
Mailing: PO Box 2494, Yadkinville, NC 27055
Physical: 201 E. Main St., Yadkinville, NC 27055
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Kim Aldridge

From: Steve Epperson <steve@collisandassociates.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 10:28 AM
To: mental health realign
Cc: Rhett Melton
Subject: Association with Partners

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To: Rutherford Commissioners

As a form of introduction, my name is Steve Epperson and I am an old time member of the Partners Board of Directors, having served on that board (and its predecessor organizations) for well in excess of twenty years. Over that time period the public mental health system in North Carolina has gone through massive and stressful changes, both for consumers as well as for the managing entities and their boards.

Over my tenure I have personally seen tumultuous times in both the mental health industry and in the management entities, including the predecessors of Partners. However, I am proud to say that for in excess of the past decade Partners (and its immediate predecessor) has been a stable and mission driven LME / MCO. As I am sure you are aware, corporate culture begins at the top, and our corporate culture of honesty, transparency, mission orientation, and respect to all persons is exemplified in our CEO Rhett Melton and in all of Partners staff and board.

I know that you face a decision with respect to Vaya, and obviously I think that your consumers would be better served by your association with Partners. I cannot presume, however, to attempt to influence your decision making process in a detailed fashion; I am a board member and therefore my role is to stay as overview as possible.

And hence the real point of this message. What you see with Partners is real, and you can faith in it. As indicated earlier Partners is an organization that operates from a foundation of honesty, transparency, mission orientation, and respect to all persons, both at the staff level and at the board level. As an organization, both staff and board, we seek not personal objectives but the corporate objective of operating a well-managed organization that by way of its culture serves all of its constituents in a timely, effective, efficient, and caring fashion.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts, and if you would like to discuss any of this in person please so advise.

Thank you.

Steve Epperson

Kim Aldridge

From: Brooklyn Whiteside <Brooklyn.Whiteside@vayahealth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2018 11:02 AM
To: mental health realign
Cc: kody.kinsley@dhhs.nc.gov; Brian Ingraham; 'Rick French'
Subject: Vaya Health Public Comment 06192018 (unencrypt)
Attachments: Vaya Health Public Comment 06192018.pdf

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WARNING: This email originated from outside of Vaya Health. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender & are expecting the message.

On behalf of Board Chair Rick French and CEO Brian Ingraham, attached is Vaya Health's public comment in opposition to the proposed disengagement of Rutherford County from Vaya Health.

If you have any questions or are unable to open the attachment, please don't hesitate to call or email.

Thank you,

Brooklyn Whiteside
Executive Legal Assistant and Clerk to the Board
200 Ridgefield Court, Suite 206 | Asheville, NC 28806
O 828-225-2785, ext. 5925 | M 828-429-2841
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VAYAHEALTH

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VAYAHEALTH

Vaya Health
200 Ridgefield Court, Suite 206
Asheville, NC 28806
1-800-893-6246
www.vayahealth.com

June 19, 2018

Via Electronic Mail only
Rutherford County Board of Commissioners
289 N. Main Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139
mental.health.realign@rutherfordcountync.gov

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of Vaya Health and in accordance with 10A NCAC 26C .0702(c), we are writing to formally submit our comments regarding your recent decision to realign with Partners Behavioral Health Management. Though we understand the county has the authority to take this action pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 122C-115(a3), at the outset we think it is important to note that your decision appears to be directly contrary to guidance issued by the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in Joint Communication Bulletin #J282 on March 22, 2018:

"Successful transformation to managed care requires coordination across the state and minimizing unnecessary change. As such, each LME/MCO and County must stabilize their healthcare delivery systems. During this period of transition, if the Department were asked to evaluate any disengagement or realignment requests, it would be required to consider the impact on the stability of the healthcare system, and would likely find granting such a request to cause negative impact. ***If Counties have concerns about the services managed and authorized by an LME/MCO, please raise those concerns to the Department."***

To the best of our knowledge and belief, no one in Rutherford County leadership reached out to anyone at Vaya Health or the Department to express concerns about our management of services in Rutherford County, or even to let us know you were considering alignment with another LME/MCO. In fact, you have stated to the media that you have no criticism of Vaya's management of behavioral health services. We are still not clear on why you want to make the change, or how it is in the best

interest of the thousands of men, women and children in Rutherford County who depend on services offered through our network of providers.

The change you are proposing for Rutherford County is also not in alignment with the DHHS identified Health Regions, which have been designated to guide the implementation of NC Medicaid Transformation (S.L. 2015-245, as amended). The plan for Medicaid Transformation was recently clarified by the N.C. General Assembly through the June 15, 2018 ratification of House Bill 403, which endorses the Secretary's proposal for Tailored Plans operated by LME/MCOs that will presumably align as closely as possible with the designated Health Regions and existing LME/MCO catchment areas. It cannot be in the best interest of Rutherford County citizens to request such a disruptive change at this critical time, a change that will likely result in negative impact to the stability of the healthcare system.

As discussed in our public comment at the May and June County Commissioner meetings, we are concerned that your decision could adversely affect the county's most vulnerable citizens: families who have a child with autism, persons in addiction fighting for recovery, at-risk teens leaving foster care or people dealing with any variety of behavioral health crisis. Vaya went beyond State requirements to develop evidence-based, person-centered solutions for specific challenges impacting Rutherford County youth transitioning out of foster care services and people waiting for an Innovations Waiver slot. **We offer services in Rutherford County that are not in Partners' current service array:** single point assessments, Intercept™, YVLifeSet™, and Long-Term Community Supports. Loss of these services in Rutherford County will have a direct impact on consumers:

- 83 single point assessments were completed at Rutherford DSS between January 2016 and March 2018. Assessments are conducted by a Vaya-contracted provider in collaboration with DSS social workers.
- 17 children in Rutherford County are currently receiving Intercept™ services offered through Vaya's partnership with Youth Villages. Intercept™ diverts youth from out-of-home placements, offering in-home services as an alternative and working toward family reunification[1]. Outcome studies have demonstrated that 82% of youth are successful up to two years after discharge from the program.

[1] The Intercept™ in-home services program provides treatment to troubled children and families in their own homes at times convenient for the families. The program serves children of any age (infant to age 18) who have serious emotional and behavioral problems. Intercept specializes in diverting youth from out-of-home placements such as psychiatric residential treatment centers, hospitals or group homes, and in successfully reuniting children with their families in the community. Diversion services generally last four to six months, while reunification services generally last six to nine months. Intercept family intervention specialists are skilled at reuniting families even when the child has been out of the home for an extended period.

- YVLifeSet™ is another program offered through our collaboration with Youth Villages. This program helps kids aging out of foster care to successfully transition to adulthood, including maintaining stable and suitable housing, remaining free from legal involvement, participating in an educational/vocational program and developing the life skills necessary to become a responsible citizen. At least four children have received this service to date in Rutherford County.
- 14 Rutherford County members are currently utilizing Long-Term Community Supports (LTCS), a community-based service for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who might otherwise be institutionalized in an intermediate care facility. LTCS provides individualized residential and day programs that teach skills to help Rutherford County members live as independently as possible. Phase II plans include further expansion of this service to more county residents.
- Vaya also currently reimburses providers of Innovations Waiver services at a higher rate than Partners, resulting in approximately $417,550 additional reimbursement annually. This is money going directly to providers based in Rutherford County, employing Rutherford County residents, rather than increasing LME/MCO fund balance.

On several occasions throughout this process, representatives from Partners have stated that they plan to raise provider rates and add these services that we already offer in Rutherford County. Partners has had over six years to develop and offer these services for their members. Why should you take a risk that Partners will be unable to follow through on their promise when Vaya already successfully offers these services today? Vaya proactively developed and expanded these innovative services to Rutherford County citizens because it was the right thing to do for the individuals we serve, not because we were trying to convince a county to join our catchment. Despite Partners' promise, representatives from Youth Villages have stated that Partners has not reached out to them about adding these services. Unfortunately, based on the current course of action Rutherford County residents may be caught in the middle of this coverage gap.

Vaya Health has also been a statewide leader in the delivery of crisis services, currently funding four crisis centers in our catchment area. We partnered with Mission Health and others to develop the State's first behavioral health urgent care center (C3356) and the State's second facility-based crisis center for children (Caiyalynn Burrell Center), and recently received a special allocation from the General Assembly to develop another facility-based crisis center in Wilkes County. In addition to this special allocation, the Appropriations Act of 2018 also reduced cuts to Vaya Health (and increased cuts to Partners) in part because the data showed that Vaya has been spending its funding on services and important community reinvestment programs.

In the rationale for your disengagement plan, you cite Partners as being consistently "at or near the top" of state reports, yet Vaya's performance levels on key measures is consistently similar to or even higher than Partners'. For example, since 2012, Vaya has had the average highest penetration rate in the State (this rate measures LME/MCO performance on access to care):

- For example, from March 2017 to March 2018, Vaya's average penetration rate for Medicaid was 8.1%, while Partners' average penetration rate for that period was 8.0%.
- From March 2017 to March 2018, Vaya's average penetration rate for non-Medicaid was 3.3%, while Partners' average non-Medicaid penetration rate for that period was only 2.5%.

Partners has been quick to dismiss this performance data. In fact, their Chief Operations Officer recently stated that "we can look at graphs, but that doesn't matter". Where Partners sees graphs and numbers, we see people, and **we believe people matter.** Our penetration rate means that roughly 12,500 Medicaid enrollees received mental health, substance use disorder and/or intellectual or developmental disabilities services, and approximately 4,000 individuals who do not qualify for Medicaid received services.

Vaya's performance is also number one in the State on integrated care, as reflected by one of the three "Super Measures" recently implemented by DHHS to evaluate LME/MCO performance (percentage of individuals on the Innovations Waiver who received a primary care visit within a specific timeframe). Vaya currently scores 97.86% on this measure, which is the highest among all LME/MCOs for the four months this has been measured. Vaya also met the annual Transitions to Community Living (TCLI) "Super Measure" (number of individuals housed) two months ahead of schedule. Partners also did a good job on this TCLI measure, and currently stands at 113%. But Vaya's performance is even stronger, at 123%. Vaya is also providing Supported Employment to 95% of TCLI participants, while Partners is only at 34%. We don't dispute that Partners performs well in some areas, but the data shows that Vaya performs better. Given these data points, we don't understand how performance could be the justification for re-aligning with Partners, causing upheaval for the system and disruption for consumers.

Using cost savings to pay for services for individuals in need is a priority for Vaya Health. In North Carolina, the Medicaid Innovations Waiver allows individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities to live more independently while receiving long-term services and supports. Federal and state funding for the Innovations Waiver is limited, and there is a wait list for eligible consumers to receive Innovations services. When an LME/MCO manages care effectively, the savings can be used to pay for services for individuals on the wait list. From July 2017 to March 2018, 430 individuals on the wait list received services through Vaya. During the same period, only 209 individuals on the wait list

received services through Partners. That matters to those 221 people who received care, including residents of Rutherford County.

Another priority for Vaya Health is our work with Rutherford County in addressing the opioid epidemic. We take this crisis seriously, and have committed to solutions that are already making an impact. Our staff serve on the County's Opioid Leadership Action Team and helped plan the Opioid Leadership Forum, sponsored by the Association of County Commissioners. We were the first LME/MCO in the state to purchase and provide NARCAN®, the only FDA-approved nasal spray to reverse the effect of an opioid overdose. Our proactive efforts resulted in the State asking Vaya to purchase and distribute NARCAN® statewide. We partnered with the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC) to distribute 157 NARCAN® and Naloxone kits in Rutherford County since 2014 (64 in 2017 alone). Over the past 10 months, we supplied Rutherford County law enforcement an additional 75 NARCAN® kits. Six opioid overdose reversals were reported in Rutherford County in 2017 (more than the previous three years combined). We are also working with the Rutherford County Detention Center on a grant-funded pilot project that offers a year-long continuum of care, including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and individual or group therapy during incarceration and MAT along with outpatient treatment and/or peer support services when an individual re-enters the community. Participants are also linked to medical care and other community supports.

We value our partnership with Rutherford County, and our staff have been part of the community for over 15 years. Twenty Vaya employees are based in Rutherford County, working directly in the community. Our employees serve on the Rutherford Community Health Council and attend the bi-monthly Rutherford Behavioral Health Coalition meetings. We provide individualized case consultation through regular DSS High Risk Staffing meetings and the Juvenile Justice Treatment Continuum. We regularly meet with the Rutherford Child Protection Team to help DSS identify needed resources in preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect. We participate in the Rutherford Regional Hospital High Utilization Team and a Vaya care coordinator works directly out of Rutherford Hospital. Our relationships with local agencies are vital to ensuring the people we serve get the help they need when they need it. We are proud of the many collaborative partnerships we have in the community, and as indicated in an email from Rutherford County DSS staff, we know others feel the same.[2]

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[2] May 7, 2018 e-mail from Rutherford County DSS to Vaya Health: "I am writing to thank you for everything that you and the Vaya Team have done to get the youth we have been staffing into placement in a PRTF. I simply cannot thank you enough for the amazing expertise, work, and extraordinary efforts that your Team demonstrated last week through today to place this child who has serious challenges to overcome. Truly, time and time again I was humbled and most grateful for all that your team demonstrated. Not only are they top experts in their areas, they are genuinely and extremely concerned about achieving the best outcomes for our clients. Even though we were working around tight timeframes, your team demonstrated that the goals were achievable and more importantly, that they were in it until the job got done. **This is true of the partnership that Vaya has shown consistently over time.** Please share with your Team how much we appreciate the team work and help working out the needed placement. Thank you, again, for the partnership and the help with our recent cases."

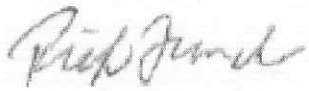
We also actively work to provide necessary mental health and substance use education for the community. Since 2014, a total of 76 law enforcement officers and first responders in Rutherford County completed Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) offered at no cost by Vaya Health, including members of the Forest City Police Department, Lake Lure Police Department, Spindale Police Department, Rutherford County EMS, and the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office. CIT is an innovative, community-based approach to improve the outcomes and connections between law enforcement, behavioral health providers, hospital emergency services, individuals and their families. Through collaborative community partnerships and intensive training, CIT improves communication, identifies behavioral health resources for those in crisis, ensures law enforcement and communities are safe, and provides police officers more tools to do their job safely and effectively.

Our Geriatric team, which includes registered nurses, licensed clinicians and qualified mental health professionals, provide education and consultation for a variety of community agencies (senior centers, adult day care programs, Departments of Social Services, Veteran Affairs, home health agencies, faith based organizations, law enforcement). Over the past nine months alone, this team led 66 trainings in Rutherford County. As part of our efforts to reduce stigma, we purchased and placed a MindKare kiosk in the main lobby of the Rutherford County Courthouse in July 2017 to help show people that checking your mental health is as easy as checking your blood pressure. To date, 60 screenings have been taken in Rutherford County, either at the kiosk or online. We are also one of only two LME/MCOs in the State (the other is not Partners) qualified and authorized by DHHS to offer Certified Peer Support Specialist training. Vaya has been a leader in the development and expansion of peer support programs and is a strong advocate for recovery and the meaningful involvement of consumers and family members in their own care and that of others.

We are concerned about the due diligence process followed by the county prior to submitting the request for disengagement, the information you may have relied on in making your decision, and the lack of input from consumers and families prior to the decision. We are also concerned that consumers and families may not have been aware they had the opportunity to provide comment. 10A NCAC 26C .0702(c) requires a county seeking to disengage to "solicit comments from consumers, advocates, self-advocates, and State and Local Consumer and Family Advisory Committees (CFACs) **using locally established communication methods, such as mailings, routine stakeholder meetings, press releases, and social media messages** ...". Other than posting your proposed disengagement plan to the Rutherford County website, we are not aware that the county sent any mailings, held any stakeholder meetings, issued any press release, or even posted anything to the county Facebook page about your decision. We think this decision is too important to exclude input from consumers and families. Their health is important, their voice is important, and they deserve to be made aware of this decision and its impact on their lives.

Vaya remains dedicated to your citizens—our members—and to finding proven solutions to county needs that will help individuals and families live their best lives. We continue to welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss Vaya's management of services in Rutherford County, and are disappointed that you have not been willing to sit down with us to talk about Vaya Health's commitment to your citizens. We think our strong performance in Rutherford County – on services, rates, partnerships with community stakeholders, trainings, and State performance data – provides demonstrated contrast to the vague promises offered by Partners. We ask you to reconsider your decision, one that will have serious impact for Rutherford County for years to come.

Sincerely,



Rick French, Chair, Vaya Health Board of Directors

Brian Ingraham, CEO

cc: Kody Kinsley, Director, Division of MH/DD/SAS (kody.kinsley@dhhs.nc.gov)

Rec'd 6/19/18

Jeanette Bosgra
147 Cricket Creek Drive
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

June 18, 2018

Rutherford County Manager
ATTN: LME/MCO Relaignment
289 N. Main St.
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

Dear Mr. Garrison:

I feel compelled to comment on the Rutherford County LME/MCO Disengagement Plan as a concerned citizen. I happened to be present at the County Commissioners' May meeting and listened to many comments from parents as well as representatives from Vaya Health and Partners Behavioral Health Management.

As a parent of a child with a mental illness, I can definitely identify with the concerns of the parents but I also heard those concerns being addressed at the meeting as well as in the disengagement plan. I know the pain of living with a family member with a mental illness and the frustration in finding services to address those needs.

I feel that our county is very fortunate to have leaders willing to take steps to improve the quality of life for those served by these services. I know many of the members of the transition planning team and truly believe they are working hard to improve life in our county.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Bosgra

Jeanette Bosgra

Kim Aldridge

From: Dr. Gordon Schneider <lifespanpsych@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 11:21 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Transition from Vaya Health to Partners

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I currently treat several IDD and MH consumers who reside in Rutherford County and I am concerned about their continuity of care if this transition from Vaya Health to Partners takes place. I have treated many of them for over 15 years to enable them to remain in their current residential placements and there are currently no other providers with my skill set in Rutherford County. I was never contacted by anyone from the Rutherford County Local Government about this transition and I have reached out to a Partners provider network representative regarding provider membership. I am concerned about the care of my patients and the impact of changing to other providers after all these years.
I also question why providers were not consulted prior to this recent announcement.
Sincerely,
Gordon D. Schneider, Ph.D., HSP-P

Gordon D. Schneider, Ph.D., HSP-P, Licensed Psychologist
Lifespan Psychological Services
801 West Mills Street, Suite B
P O Box 1085
Columbus, NC 28722
Phone: 828.894.2300
Fax: 828.894.8456

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Kim Aldridge

From: lesliencgal29a@afo.net
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 6:07 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: ATTN LME/MCO Realignment

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Rutherford County Manager,

As a Guardian ad Litem in Rutherford County, I have serious concern of the proposed change from Vaya Health to Partners for the contacted LME/MCO.

The majority of my cases, I have advocated for at least 100 children, have been deemed 'Therapeutic' due to their trauma and receive multiple services for their needs. Vaya's representatives on these cases, Case Managers, are part of the child's 'team' who meet monthly to collaborate specific recommendations for a child. Vaya's Case Managers have always worked diligently to secure providers and placements for these children.

Gaps in these services and the elimination of established providers for these children would not be in their best interest.

It is my understanding, and rather fascinating at best, that Rutherford County already made this decision - on the fly- sans a public tribunal and without explanation.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Leslie McDaniel
Guardian ad Litem
District 29A
828-748-9006
lesliencgal29a@afo.net

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June 18, 2018

Rutherford County Manager
ATTN: LME/MCO Realignment
289 N. Main Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

Dear Rutherford County Manager,

Youth Villages has enjoyed a productive partnership with key Rutherford County stakeholders addressing mental health challenges with their highest risk populations. We began our partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in 2015. Our primary focus was on providing single-point assessments at the direction of the court to help determine the best options for treatment, if appropriate, in a timely fashion. In addition to these comprehensive assessments, Youth Villages began providing Multisystemic Therapy (MST) for those youth and families needing an intensive, evidence-based treatment approach proven effective with the juvenile justice population.

After our initial success with this approach in the DJJ system, we began a partnership with the Department of Social Services (DSS) in 2016. The intent was to replicate the use of single-point assessments to help DSS determine best treatment options to improve outcomes and permanency with DSS-involved youth, when safe. Youth Villages also began delivering its Intercept program (an outcome-based intervention proven to help youth and families involved with the child welfare system) to complement the assessment process. Since that time, Youth Villages has received positive feedback from the DSS Director attributing a significant reduction in their highest risk population through the combination of comprehensive assessment and Intercept.

In summary, Youth Villages has a successful partnership with Rutherford County DJJ and DSS targeting the highest risk youth through a combination of single-point assessments, MST, and Intercept. Also, Youth Villages is currently developing a high-fidelity wraparound program that will further strengthen the continuum of services available in Rutherford County. This array of services was developed in collaboration with Vaya Health and provided to Rutherford County in partnership with local leaders. Our main goal is for this partnership to remain intact. We have not been made aware of any concerns that our key Rutherford County stakeholders have had with the service array described above. As such, it is our hope that Rutherford County will use this information when evaluating a course that will best support the needs and desires of its residents, as well as ensure that progress won't be lost.

Sincerely,

Paul Enderson
Executive Director – NC
Youth Villages, Inc.

Kim Aldridge

From: Enderson, Paul <Paul.Enderson@YouthVillages.org>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 5:03 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Comment - Youth Villages
Attachments: SKM_C55818061816560.pdf

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Attached is a letter containing Youth Villages' comment on the potential realignment of Rutherford County. We have enjoyed a strong partnership with Rutherford County and hope to see it continue in the future. If there are any questions, please email me at paul.enderson@youthvillages.org. Thank you.

Paul Enderson
Executive Director - NC
Youth Villages, Inc.

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Kim Aldridge

From: Tom elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 10:38 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Fwd: Rutherford Disengagement Plan

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Tom elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Rutherford Disengagement Plan
Date: June 15, 2018 at 4:36:35 PM EDT
To: bryan.king@rutherfordcountync.gov

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tom elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Subject: Rutherford Disengagement Plan
Date: June 15, 2018 at 11:51:41 AM EDT
To: brian.king@rutherfordcounty.gov, Greg Lovelace <greg.lovelace@rutherfordcountync.gov>, alan.toney@rutherfordcountync.gov, michael.benfield@rutherfordcountync.gov, eddie.holland@rutherfordcountync.gov, steve.garrison@rutherfordcounty.gov

To The Rutherford County Commissioners and the City Manager:

Gentleman, I would request that this correspondence be made public. The following is correspondence sent to Rhett Melton following our meeting where he encouraged me to ask specific questions with a commitment to answer them. I received a response stating that Mr. Melton would answer the questions after everything had been finalized. Reminded me of Nancy Pelosi telling American citizens that they would find out what was in the Obama Care Plan and Legislation after they passed it. How absurd! We all know the disaster that we are now experiencing from such a foolish plan of action.

It was very clear when you review the recording from the last Commissioners meeting that the Partners staff and representatives are scrambling to deliver services that Vaya is already providing to Rutherford County Residents. They do not have services in place and publically made the disclaimer - WE CANNOT PROMISE THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A DISRUPTION OF SERVICES. That statement was made by a Partners administrative team leader.

In my meeting with Mr. Melton and his leadership team he encouraged me to forward him questions and he would personally answer them. I do not have answers to the following questions outlined in the email below.

Partners did address the REIMBURSEMENT factor in the last meeting but they failed to tell the whole story. Yes, they will match Vaya's rates but only for for the remainder of this contract year! At the end of this year rates will then be reimbursed at Partners published rates. This will result in over a $400,000 loss in reimbursements to Rutherford County residents who currently receive services in the Innovation Waiver program. This will negatively impact the county. I have provided you with the facts and the data all available as public record. The total impact will far exceed the $400,000 as the Innovation Waiver program is only one of the program services offered. Again Vaya has higher reimbursement rates- check the N.C. Gov. Website. The Facts don't lie!

- Vaya has a higher penetration rate than Partners
- Vaya has an amazing customer service satisfaction rating in Rutherford County (100% N.C. Govt. Survey)
- Vaya has higher reimbursement rates than Partners
- Vaya outperforms Partners in Medicaid services
- Vaya outperforms Partners in Non-Medicaid services
- Vaya provides services in Rutherford County that Partners does not currently provide in their network. It begs the question....If Partners is cutting edge -then why do they not provide these services in their current area network?

The questions asked below in the email to Partners CEO are important and critical questions that must be answered.

The Largest elephant in the room still remains as a question. Why would the Rutherford County Commissioners vote unanimously to disengage from Vaya stating that this action is in the best interest of the residents of Rutherford County when the facts clearly do not support your statement or actions. Your decision will negatively impact the 2779 citizens currently receiving state and federal services.
Disengagement from Vaya and switching to Partners will harm the citizens of Rutherford County financially and put at risk their quality of care.

A vote to continue with this process of Disengagement is a vote to reduce or deny services to the children and adults with Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Autism and many other medical conditions of residents living in Rutherford County currently receiving quality services. 2779 Citizens of Rutherford County that have already been through the long, tedious and painful process to qualify for the Government services they need and will experience lower reinbursements, a cut back in current services and some will even lose the services they now receive if the switch is made to Partners!

If you are unwilling to acknowledge the facts that have been offered and provided. Please consider hiring an independant consultant. The cost would be minimal as this will be a quick process. The facts overwhelmingly reveal that it will be in the best interest of Rutherford County and its residents to stay with Vaya for county services.

Tom Elkins

On May 24, 2018, at 1:47 PM, Tom elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com> wrote:

From: Tom elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Subject: Follow up from Tuesday's meeting / Rutherford County Disengagement Plan
Date: May 24, 2018 at 1:44:41 PM EDT
To: rmelton@partners.org

Mr Melton,

I want to thank you for reaching out and taking the time to meet and discuss the Mission, culture and core values of Partners. I appreciate your transparency and your commitment to integrity.

Here are a few follow up thoughts and questions from Tuesdays meeting.

I also want to clarify my understanding and takeaway from my time and conversation together with you and your executive team. I have a couple of questions resulting from the meeting. The first major point is to clarify and

confirm Partners commitment to every Rutherford County resident currently receiving any and all services through Vaya regarding both the services and the reimbursement rates.
Would you confirm and clearly define Partners commitment to guarantee that all current contracted and provided services provided through Vaya to Rutherford County Residents will continue with the current service providers - providing the same approved services that each individual currently receives. Would you also confirm that there would be no reduction by Partners in the current reimbursement rates paid by Vaya?

I was encouraged as the parent and guardian of an end consumer currently enrolled in the Innovation Waiver Program that Partners would match the current Reimbursement rates paid through Vaya for all NC Innovation Services with no changes or interruptions in current services or providers for the term of the current contract date. Would you specifically address, verify and or clarify my understanding? As we discussed, I am not excited about he proposal as an EOR because a change in providers is always an administrative challenge if not a nightmare. These changes in reality usually have a negative impact on both providers and the individuals receiving services. I still do not understand how this change will benefit Rutherford County residents. I am all for change when it defines the value and tangible benefits. While I value the culture and professional approach of your business model I also value my personal experience with Vaya and their culture and business model.

Specific Questions regarding the residents of Rutherford County currently receiving NC Innovation Waiver Services.

1. Currently Vaya reimburses from $0.60 to $4.64 more per hour than Partners for individual Innovation services. In the meeting Tuesday you stated that Partners would match reimbursement rates for the duration of current contract term. You also stated that Partners had already addressed an increase for next years reimbursements regarding the NC Innovation waiver program. Would you share Partners new rates for services that will take effect in the new contract year?
2. If Partners is granted the contract by Rutherford County on behalf of the residents and approved by the State what real impact will the end consumer experience? Will you guarantee the residents of Rutherford County currently receiving services that there will be no break or disruption of services?
3. Can you guarantee that individuals receiving services can stay with their current service providers?
4. Is Partners currently contracted with every provider currently servicing Rutherford County through Vaya? If not how many providers would be not included compared with Vaya? Would you provide a list of providers contracted with Partners in Rutherford County?
5. There are currently 95 individuals in Rutherford County that are waiting for Innovation services. 42 of these individuals are already receiving services through Vaya.Can you guarantee that services will continue for these 42 individuals due to the difference or variance in service options and rates between Partners and Vaya?

6. Would you speak to and address Partners position and views regarding the NC Innovations Waiver Program moving forward?

Broader questions addressing the global impact of services and rates in Rutherford County should the transition be approved.

1. Would you address the financial impact on service providers currently contracted through Vaya providing services beyond the Innovations Waiver program? Was your statement, that there would be no reduction in current reimbursements a global statement including all services currently provided and contracted through Vaya in Rutherford County?
2. Would you clarify and confirm that Partners will provide the same Long-Term Community Supports (LTCS) and State Funded services that Rutherford County residents are currently receiving? I do not see that Partners is currently contracted or providing LTCS services where Vaya is currently reimbursing $84.00 per day. Would you speak to this specifically as this would negatively impact residents of Rutherford County with a loss of more than $250,000.

Would you define any specific services providing procedure codes that Partners is currently contracted to provide in other Counties that would immediately be added to the services provided in Rutherford County that are not currently provided through Vaya? These would be the measurable

definable benefits of **new services** offered through Partners not currently available or provided through Vaya.

Thank you for addressing these specific questions bringing both clarity and definition to Partners commitment to Rutherford County Residents currently receiving services through Vaya should a transition of providers take place.

Sincerely,

Tom Elkins

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Kim Aldridge

From: pat gray <givnhimprz56@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 10:39 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Change from Vaya Health to an unkown company Attn: LNM/MCO Realignment

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June 18, 2018

Felitta Nealey Quarles c/o Nealey Leshun Quarles
146 Edgewood Drive
Forest City NC 28043

Dear Sirs ,

I am writing on behalf of Nealey L. Quarles. I am his legal guardian,mother and voice.

I have grave concerns over the switch to this new company to manage my sons cap services from Vaya Health to this other company to this unknown company. My son has benefited for many years from his current services. The decision to switch from Western Highlands to Smokey now Vaya Health caused us to lose a dependable and loyal case manager. She served us for many years.

How do we know his services in place will remain in place or continue as they are now? Can we keep our current provider? Will the quality of service be affected? These concerns are heavy on my heart. I recently divorced and not I am a single mom. Nealey has not adjusted to the separation and now divorce. He has had to start therapy. He suffers from seizures and had to add seizure medication to his care. He also sees a neurologist to help manage his seizures. He had to increase his behavior medication to help with negative behaviors and keep him moving in a positive way. He attends a day support program outside of the county.

It is my prayers and hope the change will not affect Nealeys service already in place for him in a negative way.

My son and I are counting on your making the best decision for him and in turn me.

Thanks in Advance.

Felitta Nealey Quarles C/O Nealey L. Quarles

Kim Aldridge

From: janatdiverse@aim.com
Sent: Friday, June 15, 2018 11:14 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Concern over switching to Partner's

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

Dear Sirs, I am Jan Montgomery an AFL provider with ResCare and live in Rutherford County. I have 2 Autistic consumers living with me in my home. One has been here for over 4.5 years. I attended the County Commisioners meeting on May 7th and shared my concern with one of the commissions. The issue is that if we switch to Partners I will be getting a pay cut, and for not anything I have done wrong! Partners rate is lower than Vaya's. The commissioner suggested that I speak with the CEO of Partners who was also at the meeting. I did this and he did assured me that he would raise my rate to that of what I am getting now. He gave me his card. I am hoping that he will follow through with this and know of course that that is not assured. So I am sending you this email to have on your records of my efforts and what I was promised. I appreciate your help! Jan Montgomery 828 289 0289

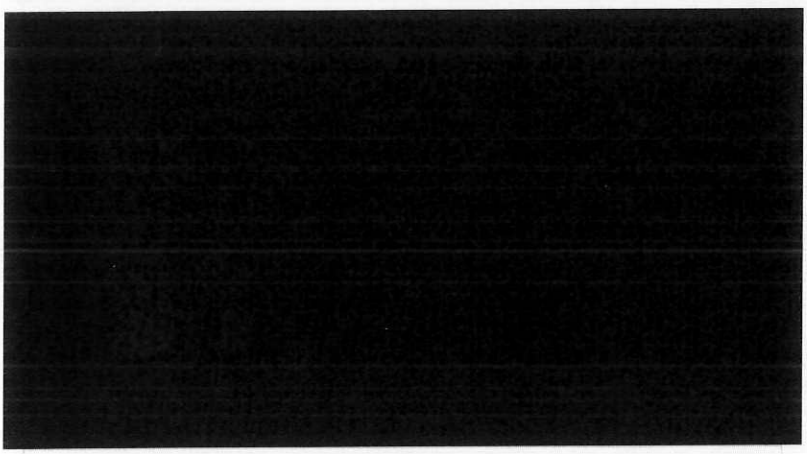
Kim Aldridge

From: bncochran <bncochran@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 12:25 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Vaya/Partners

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

I am very disappointed in our county replacing Vaya with Partners.I am a parent of a special needs child.Vaya has provided nothing but the best care for my child for 12 years.They treat my child like family instead of a file folder with a number.According to Partners website their reimbursement rate is $1.44 lower than Vaya.I would hate for my child's awesome skilled workers to have to take a pay cut. Skilled workers are rare and hard to come by.I wished for once you all with think about the special needs children and adults this is affecting.Please see attachment below.

County's quest to switch behavioral health agencies could have broad impact



County's quest to switch behavioral health agencies could have broad im...

Rutherford County request to move from Vaya to Partners LME/MCO region comes without much explanation and could ...

Kim Aldridge

From: PB PMHNP <peggybintznp@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2018 11:32 AM
To: Kim Aldridge
Subject: Re: Rutherford County LME/MCO Disengagement Plan

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

Hello,

Are you planning on sending out patient lists of affected clientele, or will Vaya do this? Patients are getting informed?

(to lower any confusion)

thanks
sam
office

On 6/15/2018 11:05 AM, Kim Aldridge wrote:

> Dear Health Services Provider:
>
> Rutherford County Manager Steve Garrison would like to ensure you are aware that on April 9, 2018, the Rutherford County Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to disengage from its current LME/MCO, Vaya Health, to realign with Partners Behavioral Health Management. Rutherford County is dedicated to improving the quality of life of the residents who have chosen our county as their home. It is in consideration of this strategic goal that the Rutherford County Board of County Commissioners chose to pursue a relationship with Partners Behavioral Health Management to manage our citizens' behavioral health services funded by federal, state and county dollars, including Medicaid. Partners is a Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO), which is a governmental entity that manages the county's mental health, intellectual/developmental disability and substance use services. To learn more about Partners Behavioral Health, visit their website at https://www.partnersbhm.org/about-us/. North Carolina law permits a county to choose its mental health LME/MCO.
>
> Rutherford County seeks public comment on this Disengagement Plan. For 60 days from the posting of this Disengagement Plan on our website at www.rutherfordcountync.gov, public comment is welcome and encouraged by email to mental.health.realign@rutherfordcountync.gov or by mail addressed to:
>
> Rutherford County Manager
> ATTN: LME/MCO Realignment
> 289 N. Main St.
> Rutherfordton, NC 28139
>
> Following this public comment period, the County will post all responses for an additional 30 days. Rutherford County will take into consideration feedback received. In keeping with our dedication to transparency, both Rutherford County and Partners commit to keeping the public informed during

this process, including public meetings, information and listening sessions with key stakeholders and groups, and more.

Sincerely,

Kim Aldridge
Public Information Coordinator
Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk
Rutherford County Administration Offices
828.287.6060
kim.aldridge@rutherfordcountync.gov

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 132,et.seq., this electronic mail message and any attachment hereto, as well as any electronic mail message(s) that may be sent in response to it may be considered public record and as such are subject to requests for review.

Rec'd 6/18/18

VAYAHEALTH

CONSUMER AND FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WESTERN REGION

Cherokee | Clay | Graham
Haywood | Jackson | Macon | Swain

May 18, 2018

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC), I am writing to express our concern regarding your recent decision to disengage from Vaya Health.

CFAC is a volunteer committee of individuals who have real-life experience with mental health, intellectual or developmental disabilities or substance use challenges. We advocate for the members and families who receive services through Vaya's network, more than 4,300 of whom live in Rutherford County.

As the link between members, providers and the community, we are concerned about the impact the proposed disengagement would have on residents of Rutherford County and their services. Vaya worked with area providers to add specialized services that address urgent county needs. The services offer evidence-based, person-centered solutions that go above and beyond State requirements. These services are not in Partners' current array. Loss of the services poses significant risk and disruption to the county's most vulnerable residents.

Care coordination is a significant responsibility for an MCO. Individuals who have complex needs are assigned a care coordinator employed by the MCO to help navigate both behavioral and primary health services, as well as community supports. More than 630 residents of Rutherford County work with care coordinators employed by Vaya. Being reassigned to a different care coordinator could be traumatizing for a member, causing setbacks in recovery or treatment.

We share your vision for improving the quality of life of those who call Rutherford County home, and we believe that can best be accomplished by remaining with Vaya Health.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Widenhouse

Mary Ann Widenhouse, CFAC Co-Chair
Vaya Health - Western Region

CC: Dr. Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

200 Ridgefield Court
Asheville, NC 28806

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Rutherford County Manager
ATTN: LME/MCO Realignment
289 N. Main Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

28139-254989

Rec'd 6/18/18

VAYAHEALTH

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

June 15, 2018

Rutherford County Manager
ATTN: LME/MCO Realignment
289 N. Main St.
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Human Rights Committee (HRC), I am writing to express our concern regarding your recent decision to disengage from Vaya Health.

The HRC is dedicated to ensuring the protection of human rights, civil rights and client rights of all mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities and substance abuse consumers who are served by Vaya Health. We believe the more than 4,300 consumers living in Rutherford County should have been asked to provide input prior to the decision, not after. Consumers and their families have a right to participate in decisions about their health care.

We are concerned about the impact the proposed disengagement would have on residents of Rutherford County and their services. Vaya worked with area providers to add specialized services that address urgent county needs. Although representatives from Partners Behavioral Health Management have maintained that there will be no disruption of services, that cannot be stated with absolute certainty. Loss of the services poses significant risk to the county's most vulnerable residents.

Care coordination is a significant responsibility for a managed care organization (MCO). In Rutherford County, hundreds of residents have complex needs and work with care coordinators employed by Vaya. The care coordinators, many of whom are also residents of Rutherford County, help make sure members receive the right care in the right amount at the right time. Being reassigned to a different care coordinator could be traumatizing for a member, causing setbacks in recovery or treatment.

The men, women and children receiving services in Rutherford County deserve stability in their behavioral health care. We believe that can best be accomplished by remaining with Vaya Health.

Sincerely,

Karen Gross

Karen Gross, Chair
Vaya Health Human Rights Committee

CC: Dr. Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

200 Ridgefield Court
Asheville, NC 28806

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7017 0660 0000 8277 6188

Rutherford County Manager
ATTN: LME/MCO Realignment
289 N. Main Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

28139-254989

4/25/18

I live in Rutherford County but work in Cleveland County for the health department, Carolina Access Medicaid. Please do disengage from VAYA and go with Partners, services are better and easier to access for Partners consumers. It's not a perfect system, but Partners is much better.

Kim Aldridge

From: Donna Ward <lynnbird777@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 03, 2018 11:17 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Vaya and Partners

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Hi. If there's anyway possible, I'd like to speak with Bryan King about this as I know him. I just need to understand more about what is taking place. The client that I have will prevent me from attending any meetings. Thank you, here is my original email.

This message is for everyone involved in the decision pertaining the switch from Vaya to Partners. Can anyone tell me the reasoning behind it? Is it that Partners has proven better care for the individual clients and their families? Will the county save money by switching? If so, will they use that money to create more day programs and more opportunities for the people I refer to as my friends? Another thought? Will their services continue smoothly? Will they get to keep the care coordinator that they have learned to trust? All these questions are fair ones to ask I believe.
I have been an AFL for several years. I've had different clients, I love my job. I am truly blessed everyday with smiles,hugs, and laughter. This job Is the hardest job you will ever do, but it's the most rewarding job you will ever do. I have had the experience to work closely with some great ladies that are employees of Vaya and they truly have gone over and beyond to help get what's best for my client. I can honestly say that they love their jobs, helping and fighting for what is best for my client. I would be greatly disappointed to find these ladies out of work. I am in no way saying Partners is a bad company, I'm only asking for the real explanation and jobs for the ones that are very much sincere and loving towards the clients and their families. Thank you for your time. Donna Ward 8284291471

Donna Ward

Kim Aldridge

From: bncochran <bncochran@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2018 4:04 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Rutherford Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

I have a disabled child who receives services from Vaya Health. Vaya has been fantastic for my family.Please do not pull our services from this wonderful organization. This will really affect my family plus all the other families in Rutherford County.Fantastic MCO are rare and hard to find. Our county is so rural and we do not have many choices if this bill passes. PLease for once think about the families this will disrupt with your vote.

Kim Aldridge

From: susan weidel <susanweidel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2018 2:23 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Fwd: public comment on Disengagement

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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **susan weidel** <susanweidel@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 7, 2018 at 2:18 PM
Subject: public comment on Disengagement
To: mental.health.realign@rutherforcountync.gov

As a parent of a person identified as IDD, I have some serious concerns about the proposed change from VAYA to Partners.
Were the clients asked if they wanted a change? Were the clients surveyed and if so, what specifically were their concerns about VAYA? Was VAYA made aware of any complaints from the clients?
I am especially concerned about the potential harm to the individuals which this change may cause, for example, having to change doctors, providers for AFL families, and community supports etc. I would like to know what research has been done to determine how the change from VAYA to Partners would impact the lives of the clients? If research has been done, what were the results?
I would also like to know, who would benefit financially from this proposed change.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments and questions. I look forward to your reply.

Susan Weidel

Kim Aldridge

From: Patsy Panther <pennypanther@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2018 12:49 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Realignment

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

Will disrupt relationships between case managers/ providers and consumers. Very frustrating and sets back advances already made. Consumers had no part in this decision. Is Partners and the County Commissioners making profits from this decision?
Sent from my iPhone

cc: Dr Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

RECEIVED
5/11/18

May 7 2018

Dear Rutherford Co. Commissions

I feel that your leaving VAYA Health is a mistake because it will interrupt the stability of the consumers. Care coordinators will change and this will be a big set back in progress of plans that have been made by VAYA coordinators. I remember when that happened several times to my daughter when she was at Broughton Hospital. It was very frustrating. In some cases providers will be affected; an outstanding source named some of those with VAYA which will not be working with Partners. Some consumers have had these providers for decades even and that would be very upsetting for them. It takes time to build trust and understanding - safety.

Finally families and consumers were not part of this process. We may be mentally ill or have other problems with intellectual developmental disabilities or drug use disability but that does not mean our judgment is clouded. Why did this decision come about anyway since there were no audible complaints in the community? I hope you will reconsider your actions. VAYA Health is a conscientious and non-biased entity and should not be replaced. Thanks.

Patsy Panther, mother of 2 autistic - high anxiety, depressive daughters and a member of CFAC (Henderson Co.)
(Consumer Family Advocacy Council)

Patsy Panther
BOX 243
Dana NC 28724

GREENVILLE SC 295
09 MAY 2018 PM 3 L

Rutherford Co. Commissioners/County Manager
Att: LME/MCO Realignment
289 N Main St.
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

28139-254989

Kim Aldridge

From: Tom Elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 17, 2018 12:43 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

Rutherford County Commissioners, May 15th, 2018

My name is Thomas Elkins and my family has resided in Rutherford County for over 22 years.

I want to state up front that I am not an employee or a family member of an employee of Vaya nor do I own stock or have any financial interest in the company.

I am the father and legal guardian of Jonathan Elkins who is 22 years old and a resident of Rutherford County. Jonathan was born in Rutherford hospital. Jonathan cannot speak for himself nor does he have the ability to care for himself. I have taken the time to speak on behalf of Jonathan and many of the Rutherford County residents like Jonathan who may be nameless and faceless to you but they are citizens and residents currently receiving Government and State services because they have a qualified need. They depend upon men and women of integrity to make the best decisions for them...because they simply cannot make critical life decisions for themselves! You were elected to provide just governance and protect all the citizens of Rutherford County but you must understand the weight and the responsibility before God for those who cannot provide for and choose wisely for themselves. They are not requesting that you process and approve new services. No, These are children, youth, men and women who have already been approved and qualified for Government and State services and care. They are currently receiving these services in Rutherford County through Vaya. I will breakdown the specific data and stats below but Vaya has superior stats to support their execution and performance in serving Rutherford County residents with excellence.

We live in a data driven society that defines just about everything that governs our lives. The data speaks for itself. I would request that you reexamine the facts and take a closer look at the data and performance statistics between Vaya and Partners.

As I entered the County building to attend the County Commissioners meeting I noticed there was a rather large sign on the building declaring, "IN GOD WE TRUST" and I was certainly encouraged that you opened the meeting with prayer. I think it is only appropriate that I begin with several quotes from the wisest man who has ever lived, King Solomon ***"GET THE FACTS AT ANY PRICE... WHAT A SHAME-HOW STUPID TO DECIDE BEFORE KNOWING THE FACTS...EVERY PRUDENT MAN ACTS OUT OF KNOWLEDGE" (Proverbs 23:23; 18:13; 13:16 LB)***

I want to publically go on record stating my opposition to your proposed **LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN** from Vaya with the stated objective to engage and contract with Partners to provide Government and NC State funded services for the citizens of Rutherford County.

It is undeniable, as the following facts will disclose that proper due diligence was not executed on behalf of the Rutherford County citizens by the County Board of Commissioners before making the proposal and voting to move forward with the RUTHERFORD COUNTY LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN. The proposal to disengage from the Vaya network and replace Vaya as the LME/MCO with Partners will have a direct negative impact on 2,779 Rutherford County residents currently receiving services provided through Vaya. There will also be up to an additional 6,000 Rutherford County residents who currently provide personal and professional care in coordination with the Government and State approved services for the 2,779 residents that will be negatively impacted.

I. **REIMBURSEMENT RATES ARE LESS WITH PARTNERS VS THE CURRENT REIMBURSEMENT RATE WITH VAYA. (Reimbursement rates for both Vaya and Partners are public record. I can provide them if needed)**

- Providers will be reimbursed less through partners. This can and will have a negative impact on current and future contracts with providers and more importantly the scope and quality of service for our Rutherford residents needing services will be adversely affected.

- Rutherford County residents that are employed by companies and agencies providing Government and State services will experience a direct and immediate negative financial impact on their income. Many who are currently employed providing care to our Rutherford residents will be forced to take a pay cut due to this proposal made by the Rutherford Board of Commissioners if adopted and final approval granted by the NC Secretary.

- Rutherford County has many problems and I would think the economic challenge would be at the top of the list. The decision made and presented by the Rutherford County Commissioners to disengage from Vaya and contract with Partners will negatively impact the Residents and the economy of this county by more than $400,000 (**FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS).**

The decision made by the Rutherford County Commissioners will negatively impact and disrupt the lives, families and care of 2779 residents already receiving quality care and services and will also negatively financially impact up to another 6,000 residents. The Commissioners proposal for disengagement and transition to Partners will negatively impact far more than just the 2779 residents receiving Federal and State approved services it will have a direct negative financial impact on as many as 6,000 Residents of Rutherford county and their families with a loss of over 400,000 dollars.

I will break this down for you using our family and my own son Jonathan as an illustration.

Should the approval be granted by the State of North Carolina upholding the decision and proposal presented and voted on by the Rutherford County Commissioners Jonathan would receive $1.70 less per hour for his community living and support reimbursement from Partners. ***That's an immediate cut or reduction in the reimbursement rate for Jonathans community and living support care from Partners of <u>One Dollar and Seventy Cents Per Hour</u> over what he is currently receiving today through Vaya.***

Partners reimbursement rate for respite care is even worse at $2.00 less per hour than the current reimbursement rate with Vaya.

The current proposal to disengage from Vaya and contract with Partners will negatively impact Jonathan's personal care and our ability to secure and retain qualified workers.

Jonathans budget will be cut /reduced by over $6000.00 annually through Partners. This will negatively impact Jonathan's personal care and well being due to your decision to disengage Vaya and move forward with your intent to contract with Partners. Partners reduction of OVER 6K in reimbursements will have an immediate - direct – negative impact on the 2 care givers providing care and services for Jonathan. Jonathan is only 1 (one) of the 2779 Rutherford citizens and residents that will be hurt and damaged by this decision.

In light of these FACTS, I would request that you withdraw your DISSENGAGEMENT PLAN proposal and reverse your Commissioner's vote or change your stated purpose as written and posted on the website referenced below. Your "PURPOSE" does not reflect the reality of the facts! Neither your decision nor your proposal improves Jonathan's quality of life. Your decision, vote and proposal will have an immediate negative impact on the quality of life for 2779 Rutherford County citizens and residents.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. **PURPOSE** "Rutherford County is dedicated to improving the quality of life of the residents who have chosen our county as their home. It is in consideration of this strategic goal, that your Rutherford County Board of County Commissioners chose to pursue a relationship with Partners Behavioral Health Management to manage our citizens' behavioral health services funded by federal, state and county dollars, including Medicaid. " (Copied from Rutherford County Web Site)

II. The FACTS defining TRUTH & TRANSPARENCY or the lack of TRUTH and TRANSPARENCY as illustrated in the written RUTHERFORD COUNTY LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN posted on the RUTHERFORD COUNTY NC website.

I will address the lack of transparency first. The last paragraph under PURPOSE in the Disengagement Plan states, **"Our primary focus is to carry out this process with transparency, commitment to our community, and the involvement of those who will be impacted by the change."** I would personally challenge you to explain how you have fulfilled your written commitment to "our community" and how you have " involved those who would be impacted by the change". I have had many conversations with Rutherford citizens who are currently receiving services that had no knowledge of the Disengagement Plan or any changes that would affect them. I have had conversations with providers that were totally in the dark.

Care providers and agencies had no knowledge of your decision prior to receiving phone calls from their clients with questions generated as a result of the information letter sent out by the CEO of Vaya.

There has been NO TRANSPARENCY!

Again lets examine the facts. I will cite as an example your planning and advance communication for the Bicycle transportation plan. Bike-Walk Rutherford. You set up meetings; focus groups and surveys for a

proposed program that did not even have funding on the table. Now I would ask you to compare your planning and advance communication for something far more important than a bike –walk plan...seriously!

How many focus groups were held for the stakeholders, providers and the community that will experience the trauma and loss involved in this change? **NONE!**

How many surveys were sent out to active participants? **NONE!**

How many surveys were sent out to providers within the county? **NONE!**

How can you claim a commitment to transparency when every action or lack there of contradicts your statement?

I personally had no knowledge of the disengagement plan presented and voted on by the County Commissioners until the afternoon of the May 7th meeting at 3:00 pm when I opened and read the letter from Brian Ingraham the CEO of Vaya. I immediately contacted Jonathans Care coordinator and he had just heard the same news from another concerned parent.

In speaking with the leadership team from Vaya they informed me that they had been kept in the dark and that the meetings and negotiations with Partners were closed. When Vaya finally received word after your decision was made, both the CEO and the Chairman of Vaya reached out to you several times and stated that you would not even return a phone call.

In the changing world of health care, behavioral and mental health management, negotiations and contracts, how can you claim transparency and the commitment to making the best decisions for the citizens of Rutherford County if you have not discussed the "facts" with Vaya. Anyone in business and certainly anyone in the healthcare/behavioral management industry accountable to an educated and informed board of directors would be considered incompetent, negligent or both if they did not get all the updated facts before making a decision. This would include discussions and negotiations with the current provider Vaya who is a leader in the North Carolina market. Especially when making a proposal to switch from a proven provider that has a stronger track record for execution and involvement in the local community. Again, compare all the surveys and ratings between Vaya and Partners. The data, the facts, they don't lie!

As an elected County Commissioner did you vote to present and push through the Disengagement Plan with the knowledge that your decision and actions would immediately cut the reimbursement rates for my son and every one of the 2779 citizens already receiving services in Rutherford County?

THIS IS NOT SIMPLY A DECISION TO CHANGE PROVIDERS. YOUR DECISION WILL IMMEDIATELY CUT THE EXISTING FUNDING FOR THE CITIZENS YOU WERE ELECTED TO SERVE WHO ARE CURRENTLY RECIVING GOVERNMENT AND STATE FUNDED SERVICES. YOUR DECISION NEGATIVLY IMPACTS THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

As County Commissioners you failed to disclose all the facts in your Disengagement plan as written and posted on the website.

Did you make this decision understanding that it will negatively impact the salaries of those who are employed in Rutherford County serving as caregivers and providing professional services?

VAYA'S APPROVAL RATING SERVING RUTHERFORD COUNTY RESIDENTS IS ESTABLISHED AND PROVEN! Vaya is ranked equal to or higher than Partners approval ratings.

Why would you propose a change to Partners when there is an established approval rating with the current LME/MCO and when you know up front that reimbursement dollars and services will be cut, negatively impacting 2779 of Rutherford County citizens you were elected to protect and serve?

Why would the Rutherford County Commissioners vote to propose a change that will have an immediate negative financial impact on up to 6000 residents that may have to take a cut in pay?

Why would you propose to disengage from Vaya when they have a higher utilization and penetration rate than Partners? REVIEW THE FACTS!

I would again request In light of these additional facts defining the clear breech of transparency with all parties but especially the 2779 citizens that will be negatively impacted by the County Commissioners decision that the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners move immediately to reverse the decision to push forward with the plan to disengage from Vaya. And, I would also request that a clear explanation be provided to all Rutherford citizens as to why this Council failed to execute due diligence in getting all the facts while refusing to discuss and negotiate for the best outcome in the interest of its citizens.

Next, I will address the lack of integrity displayed and illustrated with the written Disengagement Plan posted on the website. Often there is "spin" in written communication and then there are the disingenuous statements of half- truths and finally there are simply bold face lies. The Disengagement plan as written may have set new records by apparently embracing all three categories.

III. The FACTS defining TRUTH & INTEGRITY or the lack of it as illustrated in the process and the written proposal "RUTHERFORD COUNTY LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN" as posted on the RUTHERFORD COUNTY NC website.

"Currently, our behavioral health services are managed by Vaya Health. **However, Partners' intentional focus on community interaction and high-engagement with stakeholders, among other attributes, more closely aligns with Rutherford County's vision and strategic planning. Rutherford County believes this realignment will better serve the community and its needs. "**

Rutherford County is currently being served through Vaya with the "intentional focus on community interaction and high-engagement with stakeholders". The data documents and validates this fact. Vaya has a higher penetration and utilization rate than Partners. Bottom line, the facts reveal in providing Government and State services in the communities and counties they serve that Vaya already outperforms Partners. The average person reading the Disengagement Plan as presented does not understand the spin and would walk away believing that Vaya has not executed in intentionally focusing on community interaction and personal strategic interaction with the stakeholders. This is simply not true!

Again the PROOF and the TRUTH are in the numbers and the data. For the average citizen trying to unravel the spin, common sense and rational logic define the reality that you do not outperform the competition in utilization, access to services and community penetration without personal and strategic community involvement.

Bottom line, what this means for Rutherford County citizens, according to the facts...

VAYA the current provider of LME/MCO services for Rutherford County is already outperforming Partners in these areas.

FACTS: The most current data averaged from the last 8 months for the % of enrollees receiving Medicaid MH/DD/SUD Services records Vaya at 8.1% average with Partners at 7.9% average. VAYA OUTPERFORMS PARTNERS FOR RUTHERFORD COUNTY RESIDENTS!

The most current data from the last 8 months for the % of Non-Medicaid Members receiving MH/DD/SUD Services reveals an even greater margin of success with Vaya @ 3.9% over Partners with 2.4%. VAYA AGAIN OUTPERFORMS PARTNERS FOR RUTHERFORD COUNTY RESIDENTS!

One of the major factors that will negatively impact Rutherford County Residents with this decision to move forward is the % of persons on the waiting list receiving State and or B3 services. Vaya's average is 32% while Partners is only at 20%. The data clearly shows that Vaya is currently outperforming Partners by 12% in the goals to provide quality service and accessibility for needed services in Rutherford County. These are not just numbers and percentages they represent Rutherford County Residents. In just this one illustration using the waiting list data there is a difference of 230 people who need and deserve services. Your proposal to transition to Partners would mean that 230 Rutherford Residents needing services would not be engaged or receive those services through Partners.

VAYA ALREADY ALIGNS AND EXECUTES IN REGARDS TO COUNTY GOALS.

QUESTION: As a County Commissioner representing the residents and citizens of Rutherford County how can you make the statement, "However, Partners' intentional focus on community interaction and high-engagement with stakeholders, among other attributes, more closely aligns with Rutherford County's vision and strategic planning. Rutherford County believes this realignment will better serve the community and its needs. "

There is no substance to this specific statement made in the Disengagement Plan. The County Commissioners did not qualify or quantify their Purpose. Furthermore they present to the community and the citizens in this statement a representation that Partners will be a better option for Rutherford County when the facts declare the spin to be false.

QUESTION: What do the County Commissioners really mean when they are asking the public whom they serve, to better align with the vision and strategic planning of the County? They are asking Rutherford County residents to embrace and approve a plan that will contract with Partners to provide "LESS" for the community and immediately cut reimbursements for 2779 residents currently receiving Government and State funded services.

HOW DOES THIS PROPOSED REALIGNMENT BETTER SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND THE RESIDENTS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY? THE FACTS & THE TRUTH REVEAL THE PROPOSED REALIGNMENT WILL HURT AND NEGATIVLY IMPACT THE RESIDENTS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY.

As we examine the "Rationale" section of the proposed plan on the surface it may sound like a positive presentation until you examine the statements carefully and cross reference each statement with the existing data and the facts. The rationale section is again full of spin, half -truths and misleading statements.

III. RATIONALE

"Rutherford County is committed to ensuring the best behavioral health system is available to citizens in the community. We believe that transitioning to the model of service management and community engagement operated by Partners will best accomplish that goal. As we have engaged in analysis and review of the Partners model of operations, we have concluded that it is one of intentional community integration at multiple levels within the counties that they serve. Leadership and staff throughout Partners are engaged in relationships within their communities, actively collaborating with stakeholders, providers, consumers and others to meet the challenges faced."

QUESTIONS?

1.) What is Partners model for service management and why would you recommend a model that does not execute or perform to meet the needs of Rutherford County residents at least at the same level they are now receiving?

Your statements are very misleading and disingenuous. You are representing Partners to our community as an innovative company that will improve our existing care and services when the facts reveal Vaya currently has higher performance and execution ratings than Partners. Again, the facts do not lie.

2.) You reference in the same paragraph the fact that you engaged in research, analysis and reviewed the Partners model of service management and community engagement. You did not provide any facts or provide any data. What data and facts led you to propose a transition to disengage from the current LME/CMO when they rate higher in providing services in almost every measurable metric across the board?

3.) What specifically is unique or different in the Partners model regarding community involvement? "Partners are engaged in relationships within their communities, actively collaborating with stakeholders, providers, consumers and others to meet the challenges faced." Please qualify and quantify this statement in comparison to the current provider for Rutherford County (Vaya). Again this statement is only subjective and at best and it lacks the integrity of any real facts. Lets examine the facts. Publish the data showing the specific involvement of the "leadership" in the communities where they serve on committees and boards. Lets examine and compare Vaya's community leadership involvement in Rutherford County with the best model that you analyzed and reviewed from Partners. That's Transparency and Integrity!

There are many statements in the rationale section that should be modified or changed, as they are misleading and simply not true. I will speak both factually and experientially to the following statement. "From a commuting pattern and "citizen flow" perspective, Rutherford County aligns well with Cleveland County and shares much in the way of normal flow of local residents. There is a greater sense of connection to Cleveland County for most local citizens than traversing the mountain to reach Asheville for goods and services, including healthcare."

Yes, there is merit to a commuting and citizen flow perspective but lets be transparent and disclose all the facts. Current services through Vaya allow Rutherford County residents to receive needed services from either Cleveland County or Asheville. As a Rutherford citizen we already flow and have a great connection with Cleveland county and the network of providers through Vaya. All of Jonathan's physicians and medical specialists are located and serviced in Cleveland County. I know of no situation where legitimate services

that were needed by Rutherford County residents to be serviced in Cleveland County were denied through Vaya. Again, please do your research and get the facts! This is not an accurate statement nor does it reflect the Integrity expected from elected public and government officials.

Again, there is an intentional omission of the facts from the following statement, **"Partners has routinely demonstrated a high level of consumer engagement when compared to peer programs in the state. As the state reports on numbers of individuals who access care compared to the population as a whole, Partners consistently is at or near the top, indicating good accessibility of services to residents in the counties served. "**

Here are the facts: Regarding access to care and your statement regarding Partners high level of consumer engagement **you failed to disclose that Vaya has a higher level of consumer engagement**, based on the 2017 Perception of Care Survey, in response to the question, "Was your first service in a timeframe that met your needs?" ***100% of Rutherford County adult and youth respondents said yes. 91.7% of Rutherford County respondents for children said yes.***

Based on the 2017 DHHS Provider Satisfaction Survey, Vaya and Partners both scored 89.6% in overall satisfaction, which was the second-highest rating in NC.

I attempted to contact each of you as Rutherford County Council members by phone and was only able to speak with one Councilman briefly this morning. He said that he would have the County Manager call me today. I did not receive that phone call. It was my desire to sit face to face with each of you to discuss this matter in person and to share the facts with you privately.

According to the due process established, I am now morally and ethically bound to speak and advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves. I would plead with each of you individually and collectively as an Elected Board charged with the welfare of the citizens of Rutherford County to set party politics aside and to Govern Justly. There is no place for politics in your decision. 2779 Rutherford County Citizens you were elected to serve will experience the immediate loss of reimbursements negatively impacting the quality of their care and more importantly the quality of their lives. This decision will potentially impact another 6000 Rutherford Citizens who serve to meet the needs of those currently receiving Government and State funded services in our County. Your plan to disengage from Vaya and your decision to push forward with Partners ignoring the facts would cause even greater financial hardship in Rutherford County as reduced reimbursements will result in lower wages.

I trust that you will make the wise and just decision to reverse your decision in this matter after reviewing the facts.

Sincerely,

Tom Elkins

Kim Aldridge

From: Tom Elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 18, 2018 9:37 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Fwd: DISENGAGEMENT PLAN / PARTNERS REIMBURSEMENTS RESULT IN "LESS" AND THE LOSS OF SERVICES FOR RUTHERFORD COUNTY RESIDENTS CURRENTLY RECEIVING SERVICES
Attachments: Partners Reimbursement Rates; ATT00001.htm

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tom Elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: DISENGAGEMENT PLAN / PARTNERS REIMBURSEMENTS RESULT IN "LESS" AND THE LOSS OF SERVICES FOR RUTHERFORD COUNTY RESIDENTS CURRENTLY RECEIVING SERVICES
Date: May 18, 2018 at 9:31:19 PM EDT
To: steve.garrison@rutherfordcountync.gov

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tom Elkins <tomelkins1@gmail.com>
Subject: DISENGAGEMENT PLAN / PARTNERS REIMBURSEMENTS RESULT IN "LESS" AND THE LOSS OF SERVICES FOR RUTHERFORD COUNTY RESIDENTS CURRENTLY RECEIVING SERVICES
Date: May 18, 2018 at 9:16:39 PM EDT
To: steve.garrison@rutherfordcounty.gov
Cc: brian.king@rutherfordcounty.gov, Greg Lovelace <greg.lovelace@rutherfordcountync.gov>, eddie.holland@rutherfordcountync.gov, michael.benfield@rutherfordcountync.gov, alan.toney@rutherfordcountync.gov

Mr Garrison,

I want to first thank you for reaching out by phone yesterday at Commissioner Lovelace's request.

I trust in our time together that you gained the information needed to further understand both my position and deep concern for the Rutherford County residents that will be negativly impacted regarding the proposed LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN. You asked me if I felt I had presented a wholistic evaluation of Partners Reimbursements. This attachment provides you and the the Rutherford County Commissioners with the specific breakdown by procedure code for Partners reimbursements regarding NC INNOVATIONS SERVICES. Since Rutherford County is currently contracted with Vaya I am confident you already have their

reimbursement rates. As you review the comparison between Vaya and Partners in summary here are the facts.

COMPARING THE IDENTICAL SAME 37 INDIVIDUAL REIMBURSABLE BILLING CODES FOR SERVICES BETWEEN VAYA AND PARTNERS:

- **IN 25 OUT OF 37 PROCEDURE CODES PARTNERS REIMBURSEMENT IS LESS THAN VAYA'S CURRENT REIMBURSEMENT.**
- **IN 4 OUT OF THE 37 PROCEDURE CODES PARTNERS IS THE SAME OR EQUAL TO VAYA.**
- **IN 8 OUT OF THE 37 PROCEDURE CODES PARTNERS REIMBURSEMENT IS HIGHER THAN VAYA'S.**

I will let you define the answer to your own question regarding whether or not I represented a wholistic or global picture in light of the Hard data and let the facts speak in response to your question. I will also let the citizens who are currently receiving these services and the Rutherford County care and service providers who will immediately experience the loss in income address an even more important question, **What is the real purpose and motivation behind the Rutherford County Commissioners proposing a plan that will immediately harm the children, adults and families with disabilities and special needs in Rutherford County who are currently receiving services? I have yet to receive an answer to this question in light of the facts. When I asked this question several times on the phone yesterday you either avoided the direct question presented to you or stated that you could not answer for the Commissioners.**

THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY REALIGNMENT INITIATIVE FOCUSED ON THE LME/MCO DISENGAGEMENT PLAN NOT ONLY HARMS RUTHERFORD CITIZENS BY PROVIDING THEM "LESS" - IT RESULTS IN A COMPLETE "LOSS" OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES. PARTNERS IS NOT CONTRACTED FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH VAYA.

- **LONG TERM COMMUNITY SUPPORTS (LTCS)**
- **INTERCEPT (Through Youth Villages)**
- **YVLifeSet (Transitional Youth Services)**
- **SINGLE POINT ASESSMENTS**

You can also review all of the NCDMHDDSAS summary of rates paid by LME/MCOs for State Block Grant Funded Services for the Fiscal year 2018 on the North Carolina.Gov website. I will not take the time here to break down the 48 pages of data covering all the reimbursement codes for all NC State reimbursements as I believe I have clearly presented the facts.

Sincerely,

Tom Elkins

VAYAHEALTH
CONSUMER AND FAMILY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RECEIVED
5-21-18

NORTHERN REGION
Alleghany | Ashe | Avery | Watauga | Wilkes

May 18, 2018

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC), I am writing to express our concern regarding your recent decision to disengage from Vaya Health.

As the link between members, providers and the community, we advocate for the individuals and families who receive services through Vaya's network. More than 4,300 individuals who depend on public mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities services live in Rutherford County—approximately six percent of the population.

We are concerned the proposed disengagement could negatively impact access to care in Rutherford County. From July 2017 to March 2018, Vaya's average rate of the proportion of individuals seeking and receiving services for Medicaid was 8.1%, or 12,063 members. Partners' average rate was 7.9%, or 10,769 members. Vaya's average rate for Non-Medicaid for the same time was also higher at 3.9%, or 3,030 individuals. Partners' was 2.4%, or 2,573 individuals. Additionally, the number of individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability on the N.C. Innovations waitlist (also called the Registry of Unmet Needs) who received state-funded or (b)(3) services through Vaya was more than double that of Partners.

The residents of Rutherford County deserve satisfaction and stability in their behavioral health care. We share your vision for improving the quality of life of those who call Rutherford County home, and we believe that can best be accomplished by remaining with Vaya Health.

Sincerely,

Karen Gross

Karen Gross, CFAC Chair
Vaya Health
Northern Region

CC: Dr. Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

VAYAHEALTH

CONSUMER AND FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RECEIVED
5-21-18

CENTRAL REGION

Alexander | Caldwell | McDowell

May 18, 2018

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC), I am writing to express our concern regarding your recent decision to disengage from Vaya Health.

Members of CFAC have real-life experience with mental health, intellectual or developmental disabilities or substance use challenges. We advocate for the individuals and families who receive services through Vaya's network, more than 4,300 of whom live in Rutherford County.

"Nothing about us without us" is a familiar phrase in the advocacy community, but we believe it is much more than a slogan. Members and their families have a right to participate in decisions about their health care. We look to our elected officials as allies who not only value member insight and experience, but also invite them to the table when considering decisions that affect them.

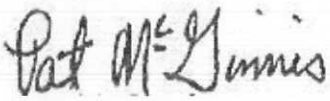
We believe member input should have been sought prior to the board's decision to disengage from Vaya. As the link between members, providers and the community, we are concerned about the impact the proposed disengagement would have on members. This change will be a major disruption to both members and their families. We have heard and read statements from Partners Behavioral Health Management assuring Rutherford County residents that there will be no disruption of services. Unfortunately, that cannot be stated with absolute certainty for a variety of reasons, among those:

- Providers that are not currently contracted by Partners must go through a credentialing process to enter Partners' network.
- Vaya contracts with area providers on a number of specialized services developed to address urgent needs in Rutherford County. These services are not in Partners' current array.

- Vaya currently reimburses providers of Innovations Waiver services at a higher rate than Partners, resulting in approximately $417,550 additional reimbursement annually that contributes to provider staffing and infrastructure.
- In Rutherford County, 634 residents have complex needs and work with a care coordinator employed by Vaya. The care coordinators, many of whom are also residents of Rutherford County, help make sure members receive the right care in the right amount at the right time. Being reassigned to a different care coordinator could be traumatizing for a member, causing setbacks in recovery or treatment.

Our CFAC has received member statements such as, "The decision about people's lives seems more about politics," and, "Consumers and families still believe in 'nothing about us without us'. This was everything about us without us." The men, women and children receiving services in Rutherford County deserve stability in their behavioral health care. We share your vision for improving the quality of life of those who call Rutherford County home, and we believe that can best be accomplished by remaining with Vaya Health.

Sincerely,



CFAC Chair
Vaya Health
Central Region

CC: Dr. Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

VAYAHEALTH
CONSUMER AND FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RECEIVED
5-21-18

SOUTHERN REGION
Buncombe | Henderson | Madison | Mitchell
Polk | Rutherford | Transylvania | Yancey

May 18, 2018

RE: Rutherford County Decision to Disengage from Vaya Health

Dear Commissioners:

The decisions you make about the future of the mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities service system in Rutherford County directly impact the thousands of residents who utilize those services. On behalf of the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) that represents Rutherford County, I am writing to express our concern regarding your recent decision to disengage from Vaya Health.

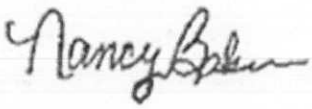
CFAC is a volunteer committee that seeks to advocate for the best interests of individuals and families who receive services through Vaya's network and ensure their voices are heard. As the link between members, providers and the community, our concern is that, as far as we know, those who will be most affected by this decision—the individuals who depend on public mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities services in Rutherford County—were not part of the process.

We are confident you recognize what a significant decision this is—one that will affect thousands of Rutherford County residents and their families for a long time. The decision is even more critical with North Carolina on the verge of one of the biggest changes to Medicaid in decades. Based on the most recent results of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Consumer Perception of Care Survey, general satisfaction among Vaya members was higher than that of Partners. Satisfaction and stability in members' behavioral health care is critical, and the proposed disengagement could put that in jeopardy.

"Nothing about us without us" is a familiar phrase in the advocacy community, but we believe it is much more than a slogan. Members and their families have a right to participate in decisions about their health care. We look to our elected officials as allies who not only value member insight and experience, but also invite them to the table when considering decisions that affect them.

The decision to disengage from Vaya Health directly impacts the most vulnerable people in Rutherford County. We share your vision for improving the quality of life of those who call Rutherford County home, and we believe that can best be accomplished by remaining with Vaya Health.

Sincerely,



CFAC Chair
Vaya Health
Southern Region

CC: Dr. Mandy Cohen, NC DHHS Secretary

CERTIFIED MAIL®

RECEIVED
5-21-18

7018 0360 0000 5924 2823

Rutherford County Manager
ATTN: LME/MCO Realignment
289 N. Main St.
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

28139

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOONE, NC
28607
MAY 19 18
AMOUNT
$3.95
R2305K141517-12

28139-254989

Kim Aldridge

From: Robin McDaniel <mcdanielrobin133@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2018 8:21 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Partners verses VAYA Health

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

I have been in this business since 2001 and have been quiet pleased with VAYA Health and i don.t understand why Partners wants to come in and take over when they don't even have a office in Rutherfordton,,My coordinator once was my Q with Universal Mental Health and she went to VAYA Health and become my coordinator i am quiet pleased with her and wish to stay with VAYA i feel like we should have a choice and VAYA is my choice. Thanks Robin McDaniel
AFL Provider for Universal Mental Health out of Forest City
,NC

Sent: Friday, May 25, 2018 12:45 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Mental Health

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

County Manager Garrison,

I am livid! The last few weeks have been an emotional roller coaster for me and my family. I was extremely angry when I received a letter from Vaya Health informing me of the County's decision to leave Vaya and go with Partners Behavioral Health Management. I was angry that you would make a decision about my daughter's care without me. I was angry that she would lose the services she so desperately needs. I was angry that her service providers would receive pay cuts. I was angry.

I am not the type of person, however, who sits back and takes such things in stride. I called Partners Behavioral Health Management. I wanted to know why this happened. I was in for a real shock. The employee explained that my concerns stated above were not accurate. My daughter would NOT receive less services. Her providers would NOT receive less pay. And this did NOT occur without input. I was directed to your webpage where I clearly see that you are seeking feedback.

Now I am livid. How dare Vaya Health put my family through this. How dare they use our emotions to sway our opinions.

I am sending you this email to ensure that my daughter and I have a say in this public comments period. I would prefer that you not use my name when sharing this information but I am prepared to deal with whatever happens if you do. I am actively encouraging others to write in as well but many are scared. Our children's well being are at stake and they are SCARED to speak out. What does that tell you about our current system?

Thank you for offering this much needed option to your residents and Vaya's members. You are truly public servants.

Kim Aldridge

From: John Weeks <jwklingon@nctv.com>
Sent: Monday, May 28, 2018 2:58 PM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Realignment of MHSADD Services with Partners LME/MCO

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

I have to say that as a resident of this county and a former recipient of services familiar with both Partners and before that with Western Highlands / Smokey Mountain Center / VAYA that this is a good move that I can support fully. I believe that the level of community engagement by Partners when compared to what we have had until now from VAYA will serve this counties residents much better regardless of what focus they have on Mental Health, Substance issues, Developmental Disabilities or a combination of these. I do not believe that VAYA's comprehensive provider model has well served us and I know that it has robbed those needing services of any real choices. You have my support.

Dear Commissioners, May 24, 2018

Thank you for making a change in mental health in Rutherford County. My grandson has been struggling with drugs for a long time and hasnt gotten any help at all. I worry that he will end up in jail or dead. In my day we helped our community and took care of each other. That does not happen any more. My grandson deserves help and he finally realizes that but we keep getting the run around with the system. I hope and pray that the change you are making will get him help and bring him back to the fine young man that I raised and love. You are doing a great thing and I thank you with all of my heart.

Sincerely Yours,

Mary Johnson

Kim Aldridge

From: MJ Jones <mjjones@email.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2018 10:11 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: MCO Change

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

Mr. Garrison,

I am writing you today regarding the MCO change voted on by the County Commissioners. My family and I have debated for some time about commenting due to a concern that our son's services will be negatively impacted if the change does not occur after we have spoken out publicly against Vaya. Several of our friends have discussed this with us and I believe that you will hear from a number of us. We are relying on the county to protect our children during this process. Many of us, myself included, would rather remain anonymous if at all possible.

Frankly, we have not experienced any negative interactions with Vaya to speak of. In fact, there has been very little contact between us other than a few calls from our Care Coordinator (whom we've never met in person) and the recent letter regarding the MCO change. I believe we would have remained neutral on the topic if it weren't for the way in which the letter was written which was blatantly designed to entice fear. I imagine that many families dealing with the Innovations waiver did not see the letter for the defensive action that it is. They are likely just scared of losing services and going back on the dreaded wait list. We were fortunate enough to have been invited to a meeting in which several Partners Behavioral Health representatives discussed the change. It was astonishing to learn that they conduct in person care meetings and that there are other services my son may qualify for in addition to what he gets currently.

For the first time, I feel like someone else really cares about my son the way my family and I do. We now have hope that we can dream of a more enriched life for him.

My family and I fully agree and support this change and are thankful to you and the commissioners for bringing this new MCO to Rutherford County.

Sincerely,

MJ Jones

RECEIVED
6-1-18

RUTHERFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,

I APPLAUD YOU FOR VOTING TO DISENGAGE FROM VAYA HEALTH. I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH PARTNERS BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE BUT I HOPE THIS WILL BRING MORE PLACES FOR US TO GO FOR HELP. VAYA ALWAYS SAYS WE CAN ONLY GO WHERE THEY "CONTRACT" BUT THERE AINT ENOUGH OF THOSE PLACES. WHEN YOU DONT LIKE THE DOCTOR YOUR SEEING, YOU DONT HAVE OTHER OPTIONS. WE NEED MORE TREATMENT CENTERS AND THERAPISTS SO WE DONT HAVE TO DRIVE OUT OF COUNTY. WILL YOU MAKE SURE THAT HAPPENS? WE DONT WANT MACHINES. WE WANT PEOPLE WHO CARE AND WE TRUST. SOMEONE NEEDS TO BE HERE TO REALLY GET WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT. I HOPE THATS WHY YOUR DOING THIS. SOMEBODY SAID ON FACE BOOK THAT THIS IS POLITICAL. I DONT CARE AS LONG AS ITS GOOD FOR US.

THANK YOU -

RECEIVED
6-1-18

To Whom It May Concern:

I am concerned that there seems to be a movement "out there" to scare the members out of supporting this transition to Partners. I'm not going to be intimidated out of getting the best care for my daughter because someone wants to play King of the Hill.

All of us who live in a world that revolves around our special angels would do whatever it takes to make their lives happier and more fulfilled. A lot of this involves working with an organization that uses employees that possess the important quality of empathy. I don't think the people pushing the fight against Partners are showing any empathy since they clearly care nothing for the wellbeing of the members themselves.

Obviously, this is simply another ego trip for a money and status hungry narcissist CEO who learned his tricks at the knee of the Cardinal CEO. And we all see how that turned out! Politics and money are the only things in play here and I want nothing to do with it. Shut them up and shut them out!

We want Partners!

Rec'd 6/1/18

Dear Rutherford County Manager and Commissioners:

Who died and made Nancy Baker my spokesperson?!?!?!?! She acts like she speaks for me and my family just because she lived hear before. She DOES NOT speak for me. She's part of the inner circle of Vaya who are doing this misinformation stuff. Shame on her. And SHAME ON BRIAN INGRAHAM!!! He sent out letters that were intended to scare us on pupose. He is treating us like objects that he can just manipulate. WE ARE NOT; WE ARE PEOPLE MR INGRAHAM. YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE CARE FOR US – NOT USE US AND LIE TO US.

I can't sign my name this cause I know what will happen from Vaya. I don't trust them and neither should you. SWITCH TO PARTNERS.

Sincerely,

A Proud Mom who loves her child

Kim Aldridge

From: shirley garcia <shirleyggcat@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 05, 2018 11:27 AM
To: mental health realign
Subject: Realign

*** Exercise caution. This is an EXTERNAL email. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. ***

Dear County Manager
The present facility and Physician have done wonders for my daughter who became mentally ill at 16. It has taken years for this to happen as other services were not as good as this one.It would be devastating to see her relapse. Saving money is important but if can end up costing more if patients can't handle transition & loss of some services.Prisons are not the place to be & there are not enough psychiatric beds available so maintaining stabilization at the local MH center is key.Please think what you would want in place if your family member was ill.
Shirley Lyon Garcia RN