SMOKY MOUNTAIN MCO

# News You Can Use

Your monthly resource for news and information about behavioral health and intellectual/ developmental disabilities in western North Carolina and beyond

## 'WilkesC3' to provide timely crisis care close to home

An expanded behavioral health treatment center coming to Wilkes County will offer a 16-bed facility that allows individuals in crisis to stabilize and begin their personal recovery journey closer to home.

The WilkesC3 Comprehensive Care Center will offer walk-in services, mobile crisis management and crisis care for people with mental health, substance use or intellectual/ developmental disability needs. The center will primarily serve residents of Wilkes, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery and Watauga counties, but crisis services will be available to everyone, regardless of insurance status or where they live.

Major funding for the expansion comes from Smoky Mountain MCO (Smoky), a regional managed care organization. Daymark Recovery Services (Daymark), a local behavioral healthcare provider, will provide operational funding.

"WilkesC3, another comprehensive care center to be developed in our northern region, will be a much-needed addition to the communities we serve," said Smoky CEO Brian Ingraham. "Through our community reinvestment effort, in partnership with our local stakeholders, WilkesC3 will be an innovative example of things being done right in today's healthcare system. In addition to providing quality, accessible treatment services, the center will also help residents of this five-county region find comfort, hope and personal recovery."

Daymark will operate the center, which will be located on the site of its existing outpatient facility at 1400 Willow

**WilkesC3 artist rendering**

Lane at WestPark, North Wilkesboro. That building will be remodeled and gain an additional 10,000 square feet to allow room for the 16-bed stabilization unit. Construction is scheduled to be complete as early as January 2018.

The center will continue to offer existing same-day services with no appointment needed. The new crisis stabilization unit will provide a safe, therapeutic option for individuals who are under involuntary commitment for a psychiatric illness, as well as those seeking voluntary admission.

In many communities, the only option for behavioral heath crisis care is the local hospital emergency department (ED). Among the estimated 225 Wilkes County residents who experience a behavioral health crisis every month, more than 120 are admitted to the Wilkes Regional Medical Center ED. EDs across the country are reporting large influxes of behavioral health patients, stretching hospital resources thin and causing long waits – sometimes for days – for proper care. Hospital EDs also

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frequently lack the regular presence of a psychiatrist or other behavioral healthcare provider.

WilkesC3 will reduce the strain on local EDs and offer a robust continuum of care that meets an individual's treatment needs locally. For example, individuals discharging from the crisis stabilization unit can easily schedule a follow-up appointment, often with the same healthcare provider, helping prevent future crises. It will also reduce the need for law enforcement officers to transport people in crisis to far-off facilities or wait with them in EDs, saving time and money for local law enforcement agencies.

WilkesC3 is part of Smoky's 2016 Community Reinvestment Plan, which entails a dozen current or upcoming projects to reinvest Medicaid cost-savings back into local western N.C. communities. Centers similar to WilkesC3 also have been or are being established or upgraded in Buncombe, Caldwell and Haywood counties.

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