



News You Can Use from Smoky Mountain LME/MCO

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Greetings from Smoky Mountain!

Smoky makes it easy to keep up with what's going on with services for mental health, substance use or intellectual or developmental disability in western North Carolina. Whether you're an individual receiving services, a family member, a provider or a community partner, we're honored to share with you how we're striving to meet local needs in a way that only a public managed care company can. It is our pleasure to share with you information about Smoky news and events.

CEO SPOTLIGHT: Message from Brian Ingraham

With talk in Raleigh about bringing in private-sector companies to manage North Carolina's Medicaid spending, I'm reminded of what sets the state's LME/MCOs apart from most commercial insurers - our deep roots in the community, developed as part of our mission over the last several decades. Relationships with community agencies, providers, members and stakeholders, especially in our western North Carolina environment, are the fabric of our public approach to managing care. We also have the opportunity to reinvest funds, rather than reward shareholders, in important services in the community, such as the C3@356 regional comprehensive care center. And, every day, we're providing care coordination to individuals across 23 counties.



Care coordinators work with people who need extra attention to ensure they're receiving the right services and supports to stay healthy and avoid crisis situations. So far this year, Smoky has



OUR MISSION

Smoky is a public manager of care for individuals facing challenges with mental illness, substance use and/or intellectual/ developmental disabilities. Our goal is to successfully evolve in the healthcare system by embracing innovation, adapting to a changing environment and maximizing resources for the long-term benefit of the people and communities we serve.

OUR VISION

Communities where people get the help they need to live the life they choose

OUR VALUES

- Person-centeredness
- Integration
- Commitment
- Integrity

provided care coordination for more than 5,000 individuals with mental health or substance use diagnoses, plus more than 2,000 people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Care coordinators often meet people face-to-face and get to know these individuals on a personal, yet professional, level. They help people follow person-centered plans for the future, ensure they get appropriate treatment or supports, educate individuals about their diagnosis and connect them to community resources. In this newsletter, you'll read about how Smoky's care coordinators are also promoting integrated, "whole person" care.

Through their hard work and dedication to the individuals they get to know, Smoky's care coordinators bring us closer to our organizational vision of helping create "communities where people get the help they need to live the life they choose." Likewise, care coordinators help us fulfill our stated mission, which includes embracing innovation and adapting to a changing environment, by incorporating integrated care practices into day-to-day operations.

Let's take a moment to recognize our care coordination efforts, both what we're doing today and where we're going in the future.

Care coordinators embrace approach that promotes "whole person" care

Sometimes, the journey toward care of the "whole person" begins with a simple health screening. The practice of addressing all of a person's health care needs is called integrated care.

Armed with a new health history questionnaire, Smoky care coordinators conducting initial assessments ask about physical health conditions and any barriers to treatment. They ask about diet, tobacco use, vaccination history and even recent dental appointments.

From there, care coordinators discuss any concerns with one of the department's nine registered nurses or the person's medical provider. They help people find primary care physicians, discuss the benefits of preventative screenings and participate in community integrated care projects. Addressing both mental and physical health needs helps keep the individual "as the focus across systems," said Rhonda Cox, Senior Director for Care Coordination.

IN THIS ISSUE

[CEO Spotlight](#)

[Care coordination](#)

[Timmons joins staff](#)

[C3@356](#)

[Recovery rally](#)

[Project Semicolon](#)

[PTSD awareness](#)

[From the doctor](#)

[Social media](#)

[Adverse childhood experiences](#)

[SIS assessments](#)

[New DHHS leader](#)

[State news](#)

[Need services?](#)

[New Polk County center](#)

[Death on campus](#)

[Autism summit](#)

[SAMHSA awards](#)

[Transitions fair](#)

[Recovery exhibit](#)

[NAMI Peer-to Peer](#)

QUICK LINKS

[Operations at a Glance](#)

[Calendar of events](#)

READ MORE

Polk County to get new health center

Blue Ridge Community Health Services will open a new community health center in Polk County using funds from a \$1.08 million grant from the Health

"The people we serve are real people with real struggles and needs," Cox said. "Caring for the whole person entails more than just checking off boxes on a form. Our job is not to guarantee success in life, but rather to walk with people and ensure they receive the care they need to pursue their own success and highest level of independence. How can people do that if they have physical health, behavioral health or habilitation needs that are not being addressed?"

"It is difficult to live with independence and dignity in the community if you are not healthy."

- Care Coordination consumer with a disability

Cox can already recount success stories. There was the time when one of the department's registered nurses discovered that an individual with a developmental disability was engaging in disruptive behavior due to severe dehydration. Another time, a Smoky care coordinator realized a person who was showing marked changes in behavior actually had a life-threatening medical condition.

Care coordinators are also involved in Project 1300, which aims to connect individuals in Buncombe County who are at risk for psychiatric hospitalization with primary care services. The department is also participating in plans for a "health home" where people with intellectual or developmental disabilities can receive care for both physical and mental health needs. Smoky's approximately 130 care coordinators and managers work in 23 counties and serve both individuals who receive Medicaid and people treated using state funds.

Timmons joins Smoky as Chief Business and Marketing Officer

Smoky gave a warm welcome in August to Steven Timmons, who joined our executive team as Chief Business and Marketing Officer.

Timmons spent more than 20 years in the financial industry and began his career in healthcare in 2011, when he began working for ValueOptions. In 2012, he joined the staff of Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions as the organization transitioned to a business-driven model based on a consumer and provider relationship service model. Timmons was successful in forming pivotal business



Steven Timmons

Resources and Services Administration. The Polk Health Center will provide comprehensive, affordable healthcare for low-income and uninsured residents and will accept most insurance plans, including Medicaid. No one will be turned away for inability to pay. [Read more.](#)

Death on campus: NY Times looks at student suicides

As an incoming University of Pennsylvania freshman, Kathryn DeWitt suffered under the "pressure of perfection." DeWitt, according to the New York Times, "put on her Penn Face. But living up to expectations - her own and others' - was just too much. Dying seemed the only way out. It wasn't."

Dewitt was featured in an article examining suicide and "suicide clusters" at colleges including Appalachian State University. [Read more.](#)

Autism summit set for October 5

The Appalachian District Health Department will hold an "Autism Summit" October 5 in Boone. Participants are invited to discuss the Autism Spectrum Needs Assessment. [Read more.](#)

SAMHSA honors entertainment professionals, advocates

partnerships that focused on measured results with organizations to improve the delivery of quality care. He has also held senior human resources roles at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Charles Schwab AMF and TIAA-CREF. Timmons currently serves on the board of Covesta, Inc., where he is chairman of the Compensation Committee and a member of the Executive Finance and Governance Committee.

"The managed care area of healthcare is going to play a major role in the industry," Timmons said. "Smoky is well-positioned to become a strong model for the future of managed care organizations in North Carolina.

"Organizations that understand the need for complementary partners and are willing to collaborate are the future in any industry. The organizations that make a difference will be those with the vision and ability to produce positive outcomes. Smoky has the vision, relationships, opportunity and ability to be a difference-maker, alongside its strategic business partners."

"Steve has invaluable experience not only in North Carolina's system of managed care, but also in leading organizations through times of transformation," said Smoky CEO Brian Ingraham. "Steve will help ensure we grow as an organization while remaining efficient and using public dollars wisely to serve all individuals who rely on these services, both now and in the future. We are very happy that he has joined our team, and he will be a great complement to our existing leadership group in skill set, experience and style."

Timmons began work at Smoky on August 17.

New "C3" facility: RHA outpatient services up and running on Biltmore Avenue

Outpatient services are up and running at 356 Biltmore Avenue in Asheville. The building that formerly housed Smoky's Asheville office is on its way to becoming a regional comprehensive care center offering an array of services designed to stabilize people in crisis and treat individuals through outpatient, facility-based and peer services. [View photos of center staff and the progress to date.](#)

Operated by RHA Health Services and established through a partnership that includes Smoky, the center - named C3@356 - operates under a recovery-oriented system of care. The center currently offers services including same-day access, clinical assessments, outpatient therapy, medication management, peer and community support services, Assertive Community Treatment Team and a Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Program. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) operates peer and family support programs out of the facility, and RHA's existing Mobile Crisis Management program will soon dispatch from the Biltmore Avenue location.

The number of positive, accurate characters in film and television with a behavioral health disorder has increased significantly over the past 10 years, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Each year, SAMHSA recognizes leaders in recovery and entertainment professionals who contribute to these respectful portrayals of individuals with mental health or substance use disorders. The 10th Annual Voice Awards, held August 12, honored actors Wayne Brady and Brittany Snow. [Read more.](#)



"Transitions" fair coming to Asheville

Mission Children's Hospital and the Family Support Network of WNC will host the 5th Annual Regional Transition into Adulthood Fair on October 3 in Asheville. The fair features topics including high school transition planning, navigating adult community services and planning for the future when a family member has a disability. [Learn more.](#)

By spring 2016, the center will have transitioned services from the Neil Dobbins Center and house 24-hour crisis and urgent care services, a peer living room and a pharmacy. Services are designed for people with mental health, substance use or intellectual/developmental disability diagnoses and intended to reduce the number of individuals seeking treatment at hospital emergency departments.

Genny Pugh, Smoky's Senior Director of Community Collaboration, said it's exciting to see the new center already fulfilling part of its mission. "Outpatient services in the local community are a key factor in offering prevention, hope and support for people in recovery as they go about their daily lives," Pugh said.

"This center offers a warm, inviting environment where people can connect with services such as peer support, Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Program, Community Support Team, group therapy or education programs though the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)."

The center is being funded by an N.C. Crisis Solutions Initiative grant and investments by partners including RHA, Smoky, the Asheville-Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM), Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Family Preservation Services of North Carolina Inc., Mission Health and NAMI Western Carolina. RHA's Mobile Crisis Management Services can be reached at 1-888-573-1006.

C3@356

Service array

Current services through RHA, NAMI

Same-day access/walk-in crisis

Adult outpatient services

Comprehensive Clinical Assessments

Individual therapy

Group therapy

Psychiatric services/ medication management

Peer support services

Community Support Team

Assertive Community Treatment Team

Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Program (SAIOP)

NAMI peer and family support

Mobile Crisis Management*

Additional services to begin in spring 2016

24-hour behavioral health urgent care

Facility-based crisis for adults**

Peer living room

ABCCM community pharmacy

*Dispatch moving to C3@356 in 2016;

**Facility-based crisis for children will be at 277 Biltmore Avenue.

Exhibit celebrates people in recovery

The Cathedral of All Souls in Asheville will host a National Recovery Month Exhibit in September that features portraits and personal recovery stories. The "Hello, My Name is ..." Project can be viewed from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 26. The exhibit will be in the parish hall of the church, located at 9 Swan Street in Biltmore Village. Admission is free. For more information, [view the flyer](#) or visit www.HMNI.org.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer program

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will hold a 10-session educational program for adults with mental illness beginning September 22 in Franklin.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free program for people who want to better understand their diagnosis and begin a journey toward recovery. To register, call 828-526-9510 by September 5.

Director of N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to speak at recovery rally

People throughout western North Carolina who have experienced mental health, addiction and other life challenges and their allies will converge on Haywood County in September to celebrate recovery, inspire hope and encourage people to seek treatment when needed. The rally will feature a "recovery walk" around Lake Junaluska and speakers throughout the day.



Courtney Cantrell

Courtney Cantrell, Director of the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) will address the crowd along with other state and local government officials, law enforcement leaders and mental health and substance use recovery advocates.

The Inaugural Western Regional Recovery Rally will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 19, at the Open Air Gym at Lake Junaluska.

Part of National Recovery Month, the free, family-friendly event is open to the public and aims to show friends, neighbors and policymakers that people can achieve sustained recovery and live a healthy life. Smoky is a lead organizer of the event. "We're striving to change the conversation from problems to solutions," said Richie Tannerhill, a lead organizer and Peer and Family Support Specialist with Smoky Mountain LME/MCO.

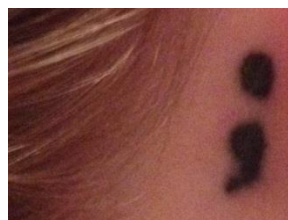
"Most people who experience difficulties in life can and do achieve long-term recovery, and they do it while living in our very own communities. Recovery can many times start with treatment, or even in jail, but long-term recovery happens in our local neighborhoods with social and peer support as an important aspect of getting and staying well."

[View the rally flyer online.](#)

Project Semicolon uses tattoos to inspire hope, healing

If that tattoo looks like a tiny semicolon, there's a good chance it's exactly that. Project Semicolon - a faith-based, nonprofit group - aims to use the punctuation mark to inspire hope in people who are struggling with or who have struggled with depression, suicide, addiction or self-injury, as well as to foster encouragement and love.

The semicolon conveys the message that difficulties in life are not the end, but rather a pause followed by a new



beginning. Project founder Amy Bleuel began the movement in 2013 after losing her father to suicide.

Social media has helped the movement spread quickly and broadly. The official Project Semicolon Facebook page has more than 93,000 followers, and the movement counts more than 7,000 Twitter followers and nearly 600 YouTube channel subscribers. There are more than 517,000 Project Semicolon-related hashtags on Instagram. [Read more about the project](#) or [view photos on Upworthy](#).

PTSD: More than a veterans' issue

Many Americans think of combat veterans when they hear the term Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Certainly, wartime experiences can be deeply traumatic and require focused attention and treatment. However, men and women from all walks of life can develop PTSD in response to many kinds of traumatic physical or emotional events.

Smoky is [working through the local media to combat stigma surrounding PTSD](#) and encourage people to seek treatment for symptoms when needed. Newspapers that helped increase awareness about PTSD in August included the [Smoky Mountain Times](#), [the Mountaineer](#), the [Tryon Daily Bulletin](#), the [Cherokee Scout](#) and the [Alleghany News](#). For more information on PTSD, visit the websites of the [National Institute of Mental Health](#) or the [National Center for PTSD](#).

From the doctor

"May the force be with you" became a popular phrase following the release of the first Star Wars movie in the late 1970s. This reference to a universal, positive power represented progress toward a better future, perhaps with the help of a spiritual guide. At a more earthly level, we find people often grow through the universal positive power of human relationships - mentors, if you will.

When a person experiences traumatic life experiences from destructive forces, the impact can be long-term and devastating. Living in fear and trepidation is the path of "dis-ease." It takes both support and courage to reestablish trust and begin to heal.

At Smoky, we offer encouragement to our local communities - encouragement that a better path exists. We do this through a busy public outreach schedule, our 24-hour-a-day call center



*Dr. Craig Martin is
Smoky's Chief
Medical Officer*

want to transform care in our region and reach the "whole person" in all individuals, regardless of diagnosis. That's why we established the Comprehensive Care Center model and are working hard to develop a medical home for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Some pretty fantastic things are happening right now in our region. One of these is the Inaugural Western Regional Recovery Rally on September 19 in Haywood County. Everyone is welcome.

The event aims to reduce stigma, celebrate recovery and encourage people to get treatment if needed, but the sum of those ideals is greater than its parts - people coming together to inspire hope in others also benefit from the presence of positive forces. Trepidation, or fear, should not be what drives us to action. Rather, let's recognize that grace and kindness can help heal our communities and move the conversation from problems to solutions.

At Smoky, we're also leading the way in improving the quality and availability of integrated care for the "whole person." In October, national experts in trauma-informed services will attend the Transforming Care Conference, sponsored by the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), to present the latest advances in evidence-based medicine. The ultimate goal, of course, is to improve treatment outcomes while placing the individual at the center of the process.

These activities orient us toward a future in which people can make personal connections with mentors and feel the force of caring. In turn, these direct benefits help sustain a world in which every individual has a chance at a life worth living and the opportunity to pursue the dreams in their heart.

Recovery from substance use or the instability of acute mental illness is a reality throughout western North Carolina. So are the value of mentors and recovery allies. May encouragement, not trepidation, orient us toward recovery!

Smoky launches social media presence

When people seek help in a moment of need, their journey can take three directions: they ask loved ones what they should do, ask a professional what they should do or search online. Digital marketing - including social media outlets such as Facebook - "allows healthcare organizations to meet the consumers where they are, targeting patients at their specific moment of need based upon their specific condition," says John Weston, Chief Marketing Officer for Mayo Clinic.

In August, Smoky launched an official organizational Facebook page to foster relationships with individuals in the communities

we serve and beyond to encourage thoughtful, engaging conversation focused on integrated mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities. [We encourage you to "like" our page and follow our feed](#) for a variety of updates, from news and community happenings to stories that inform and inspire.



Adverse childhood experiences: Building resilient communities

Smoky is a proud sponsor of the Adverse Childhood Experiences Southeastern Summit 2015, set for September 25 and 26 in Asheville.

The theme of this year's summit, organized by the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), is "Building Resilient, Interdisciplinary Workforces, Communities and Families." Local, regional and national speakers will focus on evidence-based practices that prevent and address the intergenerational transmission of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Breakout sessions will promote inter-professional networking and equip attendees with tools and ideas for building resilience in their own communities.

Keynote speakers are Dr. Robert Anda, Senior Scientific Consultant with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Ron Hertel, Program Supervisor at Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction. For more information or to register, [visit the MAHEC website](#).

Upcoming assessments for children receiving N.C. Innovations Waiver services

Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS) assessments for children receiving N.C. Innovations Waiver services began August 24. Any child who has not previously received an assessment will be scheduled for one. Currently, Smoky has more than 100 assessments that will need to be completed.



[Refer to this document for further information.](#) If you have questions or need additional information, contact Allison Farrington, SIS® Assessment Manager, at 828-225-2785, ext. 4419, or allison.farrington@smokymountaincenter.com.

Wos steps down, new secretary named

North Carolina now has a new secretary to oversee the state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Speaking alongside Governor Pat McCrory, outgoing secretary Aldona Wos announced her resignation during an August 5 news conference. McCrory taped Rick Brajer, a former business executive, as the new secretary of the 17,000-employee agency, [according to the \(Raleigh\) News & Observer.](#)



Brajer takes the oath of office (courtesy DHHS).

Wos told reporters it was "time to go home" to friends and family. DHHS officials quoted Brajer as saying he plans to bring to his new role "change leadership, shaping strategy, attracting and developing talent and putting in place the systems and culture that drive execution - the discipline of getting things done."



Aldona Wos

DHHS oversees North Carolina's spending for Medicaid and state-funded healthcare services. Only days before Wos announced her resignation, DHHS reported that North Carolina's Medicaid program finished fiscal year 2015 with a \$131 million surplus following years marked by shortfalls.

State news: Budget talks, Medicaid reform

North Carolina's legislators continue to hash out details of the state's overdue, \$21 billion budget for the current fiscal year, most recently extending their deadline through mid-September. Meanwhile, the House and Senate have moved provisions relating to Medicaid reform from the budget to a separate bill. House and Senate negotiators say [they'll pursue a "hybrid" Medicaid model](#) that allows for both commercial managed care organizations and provider-led entities.

As Medicaid talks continue, a [new report from the state auditor](#) has found that Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) has [saved the state hundreds of millions of dollars](#) through successful management of physical healthcare services for many North Carolina Medicaid recipients. Budget writers in the state Senate have indicated they'd like to end the state's contract with CCNC.

Also in August, Governor Pat McCrory [signed into law the Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) Act](#). The act allows individuals with disabilities and their families to establish savings accounts for future essential expenses, such as medical and dental care, education, employment training, assistive technology, housing and transportation.

Need services? We're here to help.

Smoky Mountain LME/MCO manages services for mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disabilities in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties. For immediate help or information about services, call 1-800-849-6127 (TTY calls: Relay NC at 711).



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