

News You Can Use

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

CEO spotlight with Brian Ingraham



Recently, I've been talking a lot about change. Change, it seems, is once again at our doorstep – and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

In March, N.C. Secretary of Health and Human Services Rick Brajer unveiled his proposal for the state's eight LME/MCOs, including Smoky, to

consolidate into four entities. Consolidation, he stated in a letter from the department, would "further improve the quality of services, accessibility and accountability while increasing the sustainability of the LME/MCO system as the state proceeds with Medicaid reform."

Under this plan, we will consolidate with Partners Behavioral Health Management of Gastonia to form a 31-county entity stretching from Murphy to just west of Charlotte (see map on next page). This service region will include the 23 counties already served by Smoky, plus Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Surry and Yadkin.

Fortunately, Partners is a strong organization, and we have a history of collaboration together through the work we did in the Western Regional Partnership. That work resulted in many standardized processes and practices that successfully reduced administrative burdens and streamlined activities for providers, allowing them to more efficiently deliver care.

So, what now? We'll evaluate the opportunities that present themselves associated with the state's plan. For example, how can a newly formulated western region better position western North Carolina's specialty care sector for Medicaid reform? We'll put our heads together with our counterparts at Partners to consider these advantages and engage our boards and stakeholders, as well.

Throughout that process, we'll be sensitive to the potential impact on all providers and Partners and Smoky plan members and will take responsibility for managing any change in a manner that's as seamless as possible. There is no current timeline for consolidation, but we've already begun important conversations that we believe will set the stage for more specific plans in the coming months.

Will there be bumps along the way? Of course. But we should all be comforted by the fact that both Smoky and Partners have successfully completed many consolidations in the past. These consolidations haven't been easy, but given the challenges of the current healthcare landscape, being a larger organization has benefits and provides eventual opportunities for greater efficiency, standardization and longevity.

For now, our day-to-day operations remain the same as we work to provide greater opportunities for integrated care for our members. We'll accomplish this strategically, through improvements we're making in internal operations and by collaborating with our provider network to better align their interventions to support whole-person care. We'll also continue to strengthen our relationships with the healthcare community and the coordination of efforts necessary to meet the needs of complex care populations.

This degree of potential change and opportunity is unprecedented, but we have a great organization and a very strong team, and we know how to use our resources wisely. We're on the right path, and along the way, we'll remember to appreciate the progress we make on the journey.



Proposed Local Management Entity - Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs)

Reflects Proposed Regional Entities As Of 3/17/16

Western Region:

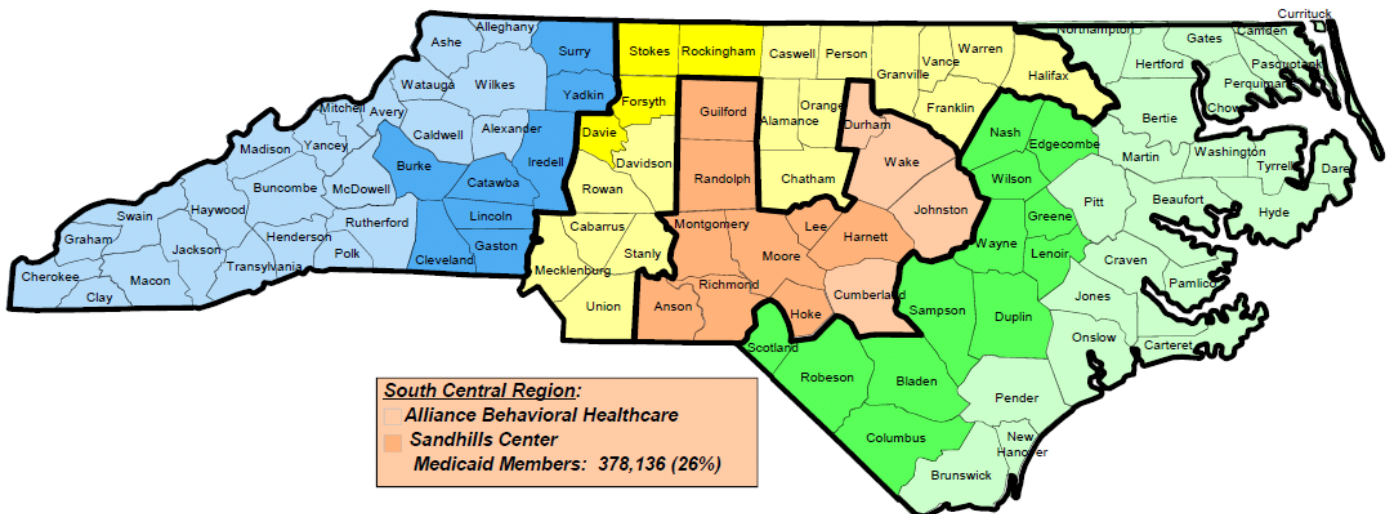
Smoky Mountain Center
Partners Behavioral Health Management
Medicaid Members: 296,658 (21%)

North Central Region:

Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions
CenterPoint Human Services
Medicaid Members: 410,065 (29%)

Eastern Region:

Trillium Health Resources
Eastpointe
Medicaid Members: 351,696 (24%)



South Central Region:
Alliance Behavioral Healthcare
Sandhills Center
Medicaid Members: 378,136 (26%)

Medicaid Members are the number enrolled as of December 2015.