

Making a Difference initiative to help increase independence for people

The N.C. Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) selected Asheville-based Vaya Health to lead a statewide effort to improve how healthcare providers and other organizations can help individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) successfully live in homes of their own.

NCCDD chose Vaya, a public managed healthcare organization serving 23 western N.C. counties, as the recipient of the state's "Supported Living - Making a Difference" grant. The grant offers \$100,000 per year, for up to three years, to build the capacity of supported living programs and share lessons learned to help people with IDD achieve greater independence. As part of the initiative, Vaya plans to partner with leaders of the Norfolk-based Hope House Foundation, the Community Resource Alliance and the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Delaware.

"We're pleased to be selected for the NCCDD grant and the chance to truly make a difference," said Vaya CEO Brian Ingraham. "Ultimately, this collaboration will better integrate individuals with IDD into our local communities, increase their level of independence and help them pursue lives of their own design."

Four area and statewide healthcare providers plan to participate in the development stage of the initiative - Turning Point Services, The Arc of North Carolina, Liberty Corner Enterprises and FIRST, a western N.C. resource center for families of children with disabilities. Each organization will work with individuals currently

living in institutions, residential facilities or with family caregivers and help them transition to living more independently in their own homes. These efforts will serve as a learning laboratory for healthcare providers and advocates statewide.

"NCCDD is excited to partner with Vaya Health to launch the supported living initiative," said Chris Egan, executive director of NCCDD. "Through the community living goal of its five-year plan, the Council seeks to expand and strengthen North Carolina's capacity to support people with I/DD to have greater access and opportunities for choices in community living."

"The partnership is consistent with the department's visions on supporting people with I/DD to live in their communities of their own choice," said Dave Richard, deputy secretary for medical assistance at the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

Vaya will host a statewide conference to launch the initiative on March 28-29 in Greensboro. The conference is designed for healthcare providers who offer supported living services, as well as individuals receiving N.C. Innovations services and their family members.

