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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Vaya Health, Partners Health Management Merge to Form Vaya Partners

Managed care organizations join to bring strength and stability to North Carolina's public system of behavioral healthcare

GASTONIA, N.C. [Oct. 1, 2026] – Vaya Health and Partners Health Management officially merged today to form Vaya Partners, uniting their expansive provider networks, specialized staff, and community resources to ensure seamless, integrated care for over 225,000 members in 47 North Carolina counties.

With the merger, Vaya Partners is now North Carolina's largest local management entity/managed care organization (LME/MCO). The merger of these two organizations reflects a shared commitment to strengthening North Carolina's public system of integrated healthcare for individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, intellectual or developmental disabilities, and traumatic brain injuries (MH/SUD/IDD/TBI) services in its covered areas. Through the operation of the Vaya Partners Tailored Plan, the organization integrates behavioral health, I/DD, TBI, physical health, and pharmacy services to ensure whole-person care for members. We also oversee behavioral health, I/DD, and TBI services for NC Medicaid Direct beneficiaries and individuals who use State-funded Services.

The newly formed entity is designed to ensure long-term stability, enhance care coordination, and expand access to critical behavioral health services across North Carolina.

"This merger is about building a stronger future for members, providers, and communities together," said Vaya Partners Area Director and Chief Executive Officer Tracy Hayes, who led Vaya Health as Area Director and CEO prior to the merger. "By bringing together the strengths of both Vaya Health and Partners, we are positioned to deliver a highly effective, compassionate model of integrated health services, making a lasting positive impact on the lives of those we serve."

Partners' CEO Libby McCraw will continue with Vaya Partners as Senior Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer. "Today marks an important milestone for our organizations and the communities we serve," McCraw said. "Reaching this point has taken tremendous dedication from employees across Vaya Health and Partners, all while remaining focused on the members, families, and providers who depend on us every day. As Vaya Partners, we move forward with a strong foundation, a deep understanding of our communities, and a commitment to delivering high-quality care and support across North Carolina."

Seamless Transition for Members and Providers
A central priority throughout the consolidation process has been minimizing disruption for the individuals and families relying on these services. Member eligibility for Medicaid and State-funded programs will remain unaffected by the merger. Individuals currently receiving services through Vaya Health or Partners who remain eligible will be automatically enrolled with Vaya Partners on Oct. 1, experiencing no interruption to their care.

"With members and families as our north star, our focus throughout this integration has been ensuring continuity of care," said Rachel Porter, Deputy CEO of Vaya Partners. "Whether you are a member relying on vital behavioral health services or a provider operating within our network, our teams have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support a smooth transition, protect access to care, and equip providers with the information and resources they need.

For healthcare providers, maintaining operational stability is equally paramount. The combined provider network and claims teams have worked extensively to ensure a smooth transition, including consolidating claims processing in Vaya's current best-in-class solution, Conduent HSP. A single claims platform will simplify processes for providers and streamline claims administration. Vaya Partners has guaranteed 90-day flexibilities for prior authorizations to support continuity of care. Both the Member and Provider Support Lines will be actively available Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. to offer direct help and answer questions.

Unified Leadership Structure
Vaya Partners will be led by a combined executive leadership team and governed by a 28-member Board of Directors, incorporating representatives from each organization's existing boards to ensure robust community representation.

For more information regarding the merger, access to the provider portal training schedule, and frequently asked questions, visit the newly launched website at VayaPartners.org.

ABOUT VAYA PARTNERS
Vaya Partners brings together Partners Health Management and Vaya Health, building on decades of service to more than 225,000 members in 47 North Carolina counties. As the state's largest specialty managed care organization and local management entity, Vaya Partners oversees publicly funded care for individuals with mental health, substance use disorders, intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI) needs. Vaya Partners manages Medicaid, federal, state, and local funding to meet member and community needs while advancing whole-person, integrated physical and behavioral healthcare.

Vaya Partners is one of three local management entities/managed care organizations (LME/MCOs) in North Carolina's public healthcare system. The LME/MCO model was expanded statewide by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2011, building on a 50-year legacy of county-area programs rooted in community-based, person-centered care. Together with members, families, providers, and community partners, Vaya Partners is advancing its shared commitment to Improving Lives and Strengthening Communities.®