Crisis continuum
Wake partnerships expand services

**New Behavioral Health Urgent Care opens**

In collaboration with Wake County, Alliance has developed and opened a new service in Raleigh to help people who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Much like the physical health urgent care facilities that are becoming common in our communities, a behavioral health urgent care center provides rapid assessment of an individual’s situation, routine intervention, and referrals for follow-up services.

The goal of behavioral health urgent care centers is to provide a community-based option to stabilize individuals experiencing behavioral health crises in a way that reduces unnecessary trips to the emergency room, hospitalizations, and even incarcerations.

This service targets people living in Wake, Durham, Cumberland and Johnston counties who have Medicaid or no insurance. Individuals with private insurance and those who do not qualify for other public funding will pay an out-of-pocket fee.

The new center in Raleigh, located at 319 Chapanoke Road. Suite 120, is open for adults and children Monday-Thursday from 8 am to 8 pm, on Fridays from 8 am to 3 pm and on Saturdays from 8 am to 1 pm. It is operated by Monarch, a member of the Alliance Provider Network.

“**These are innovative responses to real-world situations, allowing people to get the right care in the right amount, when and where they need it. These initiatives can result in better outcomes with less burden to the healthcare system as a whole.**”

— Margaret Brunson, Alliance Director of Hospital Relations

**Enhanced Mobile Crisis Pilot delivers the right care quickly**

Mental health issues account for a large number of emergency service calls in our communities, resulting in many people being transported to emergency departments despite having no medical issues. This can overburden EDs, which often lack the resources to deliver the right care quickly to people in behavioral health crisis, and it drives up costs to the public healthcare system. An innovative partnership aims to bring timely and quality psychiatric crisis services directly to the location of an individual’s crisis.

The Enhanced Mobile Crisis pilot, a partnership between Alliance, Wake County and Therapeutic Alternatives, is a community-based, team approach to crisis response that uses licensed clinicians to provide supportive crisis response in collaboration with Wake EMS Advanced Practice Paramedics.

Previously, if Advanced Practice Paramedics were dispatched on EMS calls involving a behavioral health crisis, they could transport the person to an appropriate facility or leave them in their home if it were safe to do so. The enhanced mobile crisis pilot adds...
Hospitals and adult crisis facilities are not ideal places for children and youth experiencing behavioral health challenges. To expand the continuum of care available for youth ages 6-21 and their families, Alliance Health will open eastern North Carolina’s first children’s 24-hour urgent care and facility-based crisis center.

In early February the Fuquay-Varina Board of Commissioners approved re-zoning for the site, a former Wake Med building in Fuquay-Varina, which will undergo a $7 million transformation to become a 16-bed mental health treatment center serving youth from across Alliance’s service area.

Children in need of mental health and substance use services will receive a crisis assessment and an immediate treatment plan, including care coordination, facility-based crisis treatment if necessary, and discharge planning, using evidence-based and trauma-informed treatment programs.

The facility will include a Tier IV 24/7 behavioral health urgent care, which will provide triage and referral, observation, and assessment to children and their families. In the urgent care, families can work with a clinician on a plan for ongoing treatment with a community-based provider if appropriate.

If facility-based treatment is necessary, children ages 6 to 17 can receive it at the center for up to two weeks. Facility-based crisis treatment is a level of care between inpatient hospitalization and community-based treatment.

“Most of our crisis programs really lean towards serving adults and not youth and their families,” said Alliance Project Manager Kate Peterson. “This model is specifically tailored toward working with youth and their families to try and keep young people in their communities because national data shows that it’s better to keep kids in the home whenever possible.”

The center is one of only three of its kind in North Carolina, and the first one in the eastern part of the state. The location makes it centrally accessible for the Alliance service area.

The facility will be operated by KidsPeace, which currently operates three similar programs in the northeast in addition to a 120-bed psychiatric hospital. They also operate North Carolina-based therapeutic foster care and outpatient treatment programs.

Extensive renovations have begun on the facility, which is anticipated to be opening by spring 2020.

Child facility-based crisis center renovations underway
Lack of transportation can pose a major barrier to healthcare access and good outcomes. The American Hospital Association reports that 3.6 million people do not access healthcare because of transportation difficulties. To explore how we can remove this barrier for the people we serve, Alliance launched a transportation pilot initiative in late 2018.

“As we integrate care and address the social determinants needs of people we serve, these types of efforts are critical in helping people live well,” said Alliance Director of Community and Member Engagement Doug Wright.

The Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) pilot started by targeting people needing a follow-up outpatient appointment within seven days after leaving the hospital or members calling into the access and information line needing routine or urgent care.

“If you don’t get people engaged, then the next time they call it’s not urgent anymore, it’s emergent,” Wright said.

Early success has allowed us to anticipate expanding the service to individuals needing routine care and those with critical high cost needs who otherwise might end up in the emergency department, and including the first three appointments to ensure member engagement with their providers.

“Studies show that if you can get people in for those first three appointments then they are more likely to stay engaged with that treatment,” Wright said.

The transportation is arranged by care coordinators and access and information staff, who can schedule rides online or via telephone with Logisticare, our provider partner in the pilot. Rather than waiting for an individual to mention a transportation issue, care coordinators and access clinicians are asking people upfront if they can arrange a ride when they make an appointment.

Logisticare has a call center that books the rides through their provider network, which includes a range of options from Lyft cars to fully equipped wheelchair-accessible vans so the service can be tailored for specific needs. Unlike regular Medicaid transportation, which usually must be scheduled at least an hour in advance, Logisticare’s options are often very quick—in many cases a car may arrive within minutes.

As the pilot progresses, its effectiveness is being evaluated in terms of successful trips and its impact on the “show rate,” of people to their scheduled appointments. Early data indicates that the pilot has helped boost the show rate for routine appointments from 44% to 67% and for urgent appointments from 37% to 43%.

Wright said they are looking into ways to expand the program to include people released from prison with a mental health diagnosis. “Right now we set up appointments with social workers at the prison for people coming out with a mental health diagnosis,” Wright said. “We’d like to make sure they get a ride to that appointment because that is a group with historically low engagement in their first appointment.”

Another area of expansion being considered is adding a pharmacy leg to the trips to help ensure that people can easily get the medications they need.

The pilot is set to run for three years throughout the Alliance service area and is supported by Alliance reinvestment funds.
Focus on poverty

This quarter the Alliance CARES initiative focused on poverty. Almost 15% of North Carolinians live in poverty, which is the single largest determinant of health, according to the WHO. CARES activities included a lunch and learn, book club, and activities to help people in need in our communities.

Below and left, volunteers from our Cumberland County office helped out with food preparation, serving and clean-up at at Loaves and Fishes Ministry in Fayetteville, which feeds those in need.

Above right, Leslie Covington, MSW, LCAS, the Executive Director of The Carying Place gave a lunch and learn on the topic “Tackling Issues Related to Poverty with Life Skills and Transitional Housing”; left, Alliance staff members prepared personal hygiene kits to be shared with people in need.

Alliance CARES volunteers also put in some hard work to spruce up the exteriors of The Carying Place’s transitional homes for working families with children.

Learn more about the Carying Place:
www.thecaryingplace.org/

See more photos at:
bit.ly/AllianceCARES-Poverty
2018 Annual Report available!

Our Alliance Health 2018 Annual Report is now available for download. Learn about our commitment to “thought leadership” – the creative and forward-thinking attitude of a company filled with people who share a belief in the Alliance core value of innovation – as the foundation of our preparation to serve as a Tailored Plan. Throughout our report you’ll read about this thought leadership at work, creating solutions to the behavioral health challenges faced by our communities. We coordinate services that address real-life issues, and analyze data to drive our decision-making. These are the things that set us apart today and are guiding our future of care delivery. Helping people live healthier, more satisfying lives.


Alliance ups in-house video production capacity

It’s well known that social media users are more readily engaged by video content than by text-only posts, particularly younger individuals who have grown up in a video-saturated world. Also, video and music offer a unique opportunity to express urgency, empathy, and other emotions that words alone often can’t convey. For the past couple of years the Alliance communications team has been greatly enhancing its video library, some content created by video production vendors but much of it created in-house. To increase that in-house capacity, our move to our new Alliance home office facility has allowed us to upfit a small video production studio. The studio provides quiet space for video editing as well an interview set and a variety of backgrounds that allow us to accommodate “talent” in the studio rather than transporting lights, cameras, tripods and other bulky equipment to a remote location. The result is a quicker and more efficient production process.

Be sure to stay tuned to the Alliance social media platforms and the Alliance website over the coming months for a whole inventory of new, original Alliance video content!

New member joins Alliance Board

The Alliance Board of Directors welcomed its newest member in March. Tony Braswell is a member (and former chairman) of the Johnston County Board of Commissioners, and serves on the county’s Social Services Board. He has a long history of service and involvement in his community including seats on numerous councils, boards and committees as well as involvement with many community groups and organizations.

Alliance BOD Executive Assistant Veronica Ingram administers the oath of office to Tony Braswell.

Alliance’s in-house video production studio
Our Durham Community Health and Well-Being team partnered with several community organizations to conduct the Real World Simulation for students from Jordan High School and Durham Performance Learning Center. Students learned about maintaining a budget, different types of insurance, banking, and social skills for future job interviews. They also learned about prioritizing their monthly spending on everything from rent, transportation, furniture, pets, clothing ... and of course cell phone service.

First responders in Wake County were honored at the 2019 Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Banquet and Awards in March. Individuals were recognized by their peers for their work in using the skills and tools learned from CIT training. CIT is an innovative first responder model of police-based crisis intervention training that promotes safe and humane responses to those experiencing a mental health crisis, improving the safety of officers and individuals in crisis. Alliance is proud to partner with our community to provide this training throughout the year. You can view more photos at bit.ly/WakeCITBanquet.

Watch Alliance’s Director of Education and Outreach James Osborn’s appearance on WRDC’s Community Matters program in March. James addressed stigma, Medicaid transformation and Alliance’s approach to whole-person care, among other topics. Click the image above or use this link to watch: youtu.be/gjGDoMtxSbE

System of Care Coordinator Clarette Glenn and Community Education Specialist Wendy Gantt presented a workshop called “What Happened to You? The Impact of Trauma, Mental Health, and Prevention in Our Communities” at Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina’s Learning and Leadership Summit today in Raleigh. The workshop highlighted the intersection of trauma, mental health and prevention, offering attendees insights and perspective on these issues as they relate to our community.
Save The Dates
Alliance Community Events

Our schedule of board meetings and provider events can be found online at www.alliancehealthplan.org/calendar

April 2019

Wake County

April 12:
Paper Tigers Film and Action Discussion; 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

Cumberland County

April 13
As One Prayer Walk; 9 am – 3 pm
Festival Park, 335 Ray Ave Fayetteville NC

May 2019

Durham County

May 2
Making A Difference (MAD) Breakfast, 9 – 11 am
Durham County Department of Human Services, 414 East Main Street Durham NC. Registration: tinyurl.com/y3fvgcsu.

May 6
Durham Cross Agency Suicide Prevention Training, 10 am – noon
East Regional Library 211 Lick Creek Ln, Durham, NC 27703
Registration: tinyurl.com/y4f47ssr.

May 15-16
Child and Family Team Training* 01-02, 8:45 am – 4 pm
Location is TBD; For registration information email Ashley Bass Mitchell: ABassMitchell@alliancehealthplan.org.
*You must complete CFT01 to attend CFT02.

May 23
Durham Community Collaborative Meeting 10 – 11:30 am
Department of Human Services 414 East Main Street Durham NC. No registration required.

May 25
Sky Zone Mental Health Fun Day, 1 – 5 pm
Sky Zone Durham, Northgate Mall, 1720 Guess Rd Ste 90, Durham, NC 27701. Download the flyer: www.alliancehealthplan.org/skyzone2019/; take it to Sky Zone and mention that you are there for Mental Health Awareness to get $2 off your jump.

Johnston County

May 2:
Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope Film Screening 6 – 8 pm
Johnston Medical Mall, 514 N. Brightleaf Blvd., Smithfield, NC 27577. Free; no registration required.

May 2019

Johnston County

April 6:
3rd Annual Health & Wellness Expo; 9 am – 3 pm

April 13
SSStrong Community Day; 1 -3 pm
Smithfield Selma High School Football Field, 700 E Booker Dairy Rd, Smithfield, NC 27577.
that also offers a variety of other behavioral health services at locations across the state.

“Those in need of mental health support often wait weeks for an appointment. The Behavioral Health Urgent Care will offer same-day service and will assist people who are in a crisis to get the critical mental health and substance use disorder services that most likely are unavailable or not easily accessible,” said Monarch’s Vice President of Operations for Outpatient Services Robin Henderson-Wiley. “This facility is the collaboration of so many amazing partners, like Alliance Health and Wake County, and is one example of how a community can work together to provide the necessary care for people with very complex needs.”

Visitors to urgent care have access to psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, and other clinical staff in a safe, respectful environment. Center staff see people in a variety of situations, including people who need a medication refill to remain stable but face a wait to see their regular provider, people in acute psychological distress, and people seeking urgent assistance with a substance use disorder. The clinic is a resource for school staff who need quick help for youth in distress and parents who are required to get psychiatric assessments for children before they are allowed back in school. Otherwise they often face a long wait for an appointment at a traditional mental health practice.

A visit to the center averages about two hours, and begins with a nursing assessment and a drug and alcohol screening to assess whether an individual is physically stable, followed by a crisis assessment to determine what services are appropriate. Staff also conduct an assessment of social determinants, such as housing, food security and social support, to determine whether an individual needs to be connected with other services to maintain stability.

Alliance opened a similar urgent care center in Durham in summer 2017. It served more than 1,300 people last year, with 90% seeing a physician/prescriber on the same day. Only 6% of individuals with Medicaid seen at the Durham center had an emergency department visit in the following 30 days.

“Alliance is committed to giving people access to services when they need it and in the most appropriate settings,” said Dr. Margaret Brunson, Alliance Director of Hospital Relations. “The behavioral health urgent care is an innovative way to de-escalate crises, address social needs, and prevent unnecessary use of higher levels of care.

This level of care is not suited for drug/alcohol detoxification, people with urgent medical needs, or when it is clear that hospitalization is required. In those cases, a hospital or one of Alliance’s Crisis and Assessment Centers is more appropriate. Locations of these facilities are available on the Alliance website at AllianceHealthPlan.org. Alliance also provides an Access and Information Line staffed by clinicians 24/7 at (800) 510-9132.

Representative David Price (center) visited the Washington Terrace Community in Raleigh in February. Alliance Housing Specialist Alex Rubenstein (third from right) talked with Rep. Price about the 17 units at Washington Terrace that have been set aside for our Transition to Community Living program.

Enhanced Mobile Crisis
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more options. Six clinicians, employed by Therapeutic Alternatives, are embedded within the Wake EMS system and can be dispatched when needed to do a screening, assessment and intervention and determine what types of support the person may need to stay in their home if possible. If a person requires more immediate behavioral health services they may be transported to a crisis facility or to the new behavioral health urgent care.

After an individual’s initial event, the mobile crisis clinician can do case management for up to 30 days with the individual. If they have helped the person connect to resources, the clinician can make sure the person actually gets to their appointment, even arranging transportation if necessary, and they can make sure the person is actively in treatment and not ending up back in a crisis situation.

A primary goal of the enhanced mobile crisis pilot is to de-escalate crises and connect people with help in their community, keeping them in their homes if possible.
In February Alliance provided behavioral health resources to more than 40 seniors at the Durham Center for Senior Life during their Heart Health Awareness Day in February. The event included health screenings, health resource booths, and lectures from a notable Duke Cardiologist.

In March Alliance partnered with Johnston County Public Schools to train 38 school psychologists, social workers, nurses, and school counselors in the PREPaRE Workshop 2 curriculum, “Crisis Intervention and Recovery: The Roles of School-Based Mental Health Professionals.” The workshop provided knowledge essential to meeting the mental health needs of students and staff following a crisis event.

We are partnering to support More Powerful NC, a public education campaign that launches this week to raise awareness about the opioid epidemic and empower North Carolinians to take action to address the crisis in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities.

The More Powerful NC campaign is supported by a coalition of North Carolina businesses, healthcare organizations, and state agencies that helped create, fund, and provide resources for this campaign, which was initiated by Attorney General Josh Stein and DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen.

The campaign website, [www.MorePowerfulNC.org](http://www.MorePowerfulNC.org), helps people understand the risks associated with opioids and provides treatment and recovery resources. The website also gives people a wide range of tools and ideas to get involved in their communities and be part of our work to confront the epidemic.

**Alliance Resources**

**For Action on Opioids**

The Alliance For Action on Opioids website ([AllianceForAction.org](http://AllianceForAction.org)) is a resource to help individuals, family members, and professionals take small but important steps in their lives and work to help stem the tide of the opioid epidemic.

**Discover** [Recovery University](http://RecoveryUniversity), the online training gateway that allows users to register for all Alliance trainings (online and in-person), including Mental Health First Aid.

**The It’s Time to Re-Think campaign** aims to debunk the common myths and misconceptions about people with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities that create stigma and keep them from getting the help they need.

Alliance InTouch is a newsletter for the employees and community of Alliance Health. Please send comments and suggestions about this publication and its contents to Lisa Brockmeier: [LBrockmeier@alliancehealthplan.org](mailto:LBrockmeier@alliancehealthplan.org)

[24-Hour Access And Information Line](#) Call (800) 510-9132

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