When a disaster such as a hurricane strikes, immediate thoughts are for safety and survival, but the stresses of upheaval and uncertainty can make an impact on mental health that lasts long after physical safety has been ensured. That’s why Alliance staff swung into action for Hurricane Florence, which necessitated the evacuation or rescue of more than 5,200 people and caused at least $17 billion in damages to homes, businesses and infrastructure.

Days before the storm made landfall, our staff contacted all residential providers to inquire about disaster preparedness and to offer support, pushed disaster preparedness information out to all providers and began asking for licensed provider volunteers to assist in shelters.

During and immediately following the storm, 25 Alliance staff and 62 provider volunteers from eight of our provider agencies offered support at 20 shelters in our service area, including the state medical shelter in Clayton and the “mega-shelter” at UNC-Chapel Hill. Volunteers provided a combination of supportive counseling, limited clinical services and general support. Provider agencies included Communicare, Renew and Touch of Grace in Cumberland County and Carolina Outreach, Easterseals UCP, Hope Services, Monarch and Turning Point Family Care in Wake County.

Cumberland County, which is still grappling with the effects of Hurricane Matthew in 2016, was the hardest-hit by Florence of the counties Alliance serves. Alliance and provider volunteers provided behavioral health services and outreach in 10 shelters, making sure that guests had our 24/7 access and information number should a crisis arise. Assistance to shelter residents included help with medication issues, emergency support, relaxation techniques, and few cases of crisis service response. Volunteers also brought in games and cards to help families cope with being stuck in a shelter.

Alliance Community Education Specialist Laressa Witt said that Alliance has been working with the Cumberland...
As part of our efforts against opioid misuse, Alliance received a donation of 30,000 drug deactivation pouches to distribute across our service area. These pouches will allow individuals to safely dispose of expired or unneeded medications, especially opioid pain medications and other narcotics, at home to prevent misuse, abuse and addiction. Each of the donated pouches can hold up to 45 pills, which means that if each pouch is used to maximum capacity, it would get rid of 1,350,000 unused, unneeded pills.

Four North Carolina cities are ranked in the top 20 nationally for opioid abuse, including one in the Alliance region. Research shows that only one child in 20 who misuses prescription medications say they get them from a stranger, a drug dealer or the internet. Instead, two thirds of all people who misuse prescription medications get them from friends and family. These statistics underscore the importance of securing medications at home and properly disposing of leftover medications to prevent them from being misused.

These strategies and other simple steps all citizens can take to fight opioid misuse and addiction are featured on our Alliance For Action website On Opioids (AllianceForAction.org) which also provides information about preventing overdose deaths with naloxone, a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose, and about recognizing the red flags of opioid misuse.

“At Alliance we’re approaching the opioid epidemic from multiple directions,” said Alliance CEO Rob Robinson. “We’ve expanded and improved the services that are available to people with addictions, and we’re addressing the social determinants of health – environmental factors that present barriers to people engaging and remaining in treatment and recovery, including housing, transportation, food security and education. We thank Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals for this donation that will allow thousands of people we serve to safely dispose of dangerous medications before they get into the wrong hands.”

Alliance’s Care Management Division is overseeing a strategic plan to distribute the pouches across Durham, Wake, Cumberland and Johnston counties. This includes routing of pouches to high-risk individuals by Alliance Care Coordinators and efforts by the Alliance Community Relations Department to share pouches as part of its outreach activities. Alliance is also making donations to partner organizations that are working to fight drug misuse, including the Wake County Sheriff’s department, which will receive 1,000 of the pouches in early October for deputies to distribute.

The pouches use patented technology to neutralize the active ingredients in opioid painkillers and other organic drugs in pill, liquid and transdermal patch forms. The pouches help provide a safe and responsible medication disposal method, rendering the drugs ineffective and safe for disposal in any setting, preventing misuse of leftover prescription medication.

Wake County Representative Chris Malone, who helped facilitate the pouch donation, said the pouches address an important aspect of prevention efforts. “The problem of safe disposal of unused medication is one that has plagued us for a very long time. There are other programs, like the Take Back Program, and it does a great job but it’s just not widely enough accessible. Many medications cannot simply be disposed of by throwing them in the trash or down the toilet. We are so blessed that right here in House District 35 we have a company like Mallinckrodt that has been generous enough to help fight the opioid epidemic with a product that safely and conveniently disposes extra medications so they do not end up where they may be easy to access and abuse.”

The pouches were developed and manufactured by Minneapolis-based Verde Technologies. For more information on the drug disposal pouches, please visit deterrasystem.com.
Jails in North Carolina have been dealing with a growing wave of inmates with behavioral health and substance use disorder issues, and traditional law enforcement training doesn’t always prepare detention officers for what they may encounter. As part of our growing partnership with first responders in the communities we serve, Alliance recently trained the Wake County Sheriff’s Office detention staff in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

The MHFA course teaches a five-step action plan that guides trainees through the process of reaching out and offering appropriate support to a person in need until professional treatment is secured or the crisis resolves. Just as CPR helps people without clinical training assist someone having a heart attack, MHFA prepares people to interact with a person experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

“At any given time 65 to 75 percent of the jail population could have some form of mental health or substance use disorder or intellectual or developmental disability,” said Alliance Criminal Justice Specialist Roosevelt Richard, who teaches MHFA classes for first responders. “This training has provided these officers with tools they may use on a daily basis, and not just in their jobs. These officers have a very stressful job, in some ways thankless, and we tried to promote this as a tool to recognize and help when one of your co-workers may be struggling with something.”

According to Captain Ted Brown of the Wake Sheriff’s Office detention staff, the training has been well-received by officers. “It’s helping us to adapt and giving our officers a new perspective on how to communicate with different people,” Brown said.

Richard said he received anecdotal evidence that the training is helping detention staff after a chance meeting with an officer in a store. “He said he had noticed an inmate was acting a little different, but he wasn’t sure what was going on,” Richard said. “The more he talked to him, the more he realized that the inmate was experiencing some psychosis, and based on that he was able to refer the inmate to receive additional support. He said ‘I felt like I made a difference that day’ which made me feel good.”

Alliance has an ongoing agreement with the Sheriff’s Office to provide training to new staff during the detention certification classes. The partnership with the Wake County Sheriff’s Office is a continuation of Alliance’s commitment to increase the safety of both citizens and first responders by providing either MHFA or Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. CIT training teaches police and other first responders how to recognize and respond appropriately to individuals in behavioral health crisis so that they may de-escalate dangerous situations and refer individuals, when appropriate, to treatment instead of emergency departments or jail. In 2017, Alliance worked with the Raleigh Police Department to train every employee—officers as well as non-sworn employees—in one of the two trainings.

The partnership with RPD is ongoing, and every academy class gets the full 40-hour CIT training. In addition, Alliance is in the process of training the Garner Police Department and will train Knightdale police in January 2019. Richard said that Apex police will also receive training as soon as scheduling allows.

“We’re lucky because a lot of our area departments have signed the International Association of Chiefs of Police One Mind campaign pledge,” Richard said. The One Mind Campaign (theiacp.org/onemindcampaign) seeks to ensure successful interactions between police officers and people affected by mental illness. To join the campaign, law enforcement agencies must pledge to implement certain practices, which include mental health first aid and crisis intervention team training.

Alliance also teaches a veteran CIT class, which is an adjunct class for first responders who are 40-hour CIT certified and also military veterans.
Alliance CARES spotlights early childhood development

It’s been a busy quarter for Alliance CARES, with plenty of opportunities for employees to volunteer, donate, and become educated about the importance of early childhood development as a social determinant of health. Healthy early child development strongly influences well-being, obesity/stunting, mental health, heart disease, competence in literacy and numeracy, criminality, and economic participation throughout life.

Members of Alliance’s Community Relations team participated in Cumberland County Health Department’s 2nd annual Baby Shower for young mothers-to-be and their families. Alliance staff donated many baby items, including diapers, bottles, booties, socks and 50 baby hats crocheted by one staff member. Parents-to-be who attended the event also received important information about preparing for delivery and parenthood as well as opportunities to sign up for services and learn about community resources.

Alliance’s Durham Community office delivered donated goods and school supplies to Central Park School for Children in Durham. Additional, staff met with the school’s counselors and social workers to talk about Alliance and the services and connections that would be beneficial to the school.

CARES volunteers helped staff at Sherwood Park Elementary in Fayetteville, Eastway Elementary in Durham and Creech Road Elementary in Garner clean, organize and decorate classrooms in preparation for the new school year.
Advancing NC Whole Health, a coalition of three high-performing local management entity/managed care organizations (LME/MCOs) – Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, Vaya Health, and Trillium Health Resources – recently entered into two agreements to collaborate under the state’s new Medicaid managed care program slated to launch in the fall of 2019.

The agreements, one with UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of North Carolina and the other with AmeriHealth Caritas, provide for collaboration on the delivery of integrated behavioral health, physical health and pharmacy services to beneficiaries under the Medicaid and NC Health Choice 1115 Demonstration Waiver. This transformed Medicaid model is designed to deliver a whole-person-centered system of care.

The managed-care plans will include up to four statewide commercial networks and 12 regional provider-led entities. They will offer standard plans, which will provide integrated physical health, behavioral health, and pharmacy services to most Medicaid and NC Health Choice beneficiaries. Tailored plans will serve populations with unusual health care demands.

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan and AmeriHealth Caritas will seek to win Standard Benefit Plan contracts for Medicaid managed care prepaid health plans (PHPs). The coalition members would operate the behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability tailored plans.

“Alliance Behavioral Healthcare is excited about these partnerships as they will advance whole-person care for the specialized populations we have long served and for other North Carolina Medicaid beneficiaries,” said Rob Robinson, Alliance CEO.

Collectively, the Advancing NC Whole Health coalition is responsible for managing publicly funded behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) services in three catchment areas that span North Carolina from the mountains to the sea. Together, they are responsible for managing more than $1.375 billion in public funds and 715,000 Medicaid covered lives across 53 counties.
Disaster Recovery Coalition (CDRC) and its Unmet Needs Committee since Matthew, and will continue that work in Florence's aftermath.

“Many people were already precariously housed because of Hurricane Matthew, and we are still supporting them through their transitions,” she said.

Alliance staff and volunteers also deployed to shelters in Wake County, which hosted people who evacuated from various counties in the impact area. To help ease the stress of being cooped up indoors with nothing to do, Alliance Director of System Engagement Vaughn Crawford turned to our partners at the YMCA.

“One of the things that became apparent pretty quickly is the kids needing structure and entertainment,” Crawford said. “While the amazing Wake staff were tending to the basic needs and healthcare of the people, our partners at the YMCA rallied to provide structure, programming, fun and respite to families in the Wake shelters.”

Crawford’s efforts extended beyond the two-legged evacuees. When Roger, a Hurricane Florence evacuee staying at the Southeast High School shelter in Raleigh, needed emergency medical attention, he left his mobility service dog, Parker, in the care of his roommate. When the shelter was closed and Roger’s roommate had to go to a shelter in Winston-Salem, Crawford stepped up to help. She took temporary custody of Parker and made sure he was safe until he could be reunited with Roger, who had been moved into the medical shelter in Clayton.

In the week following the storm, Alliance staff joined efforts by our community partners to assist people in the areas most affected. When GoTriangle announced their Hurricane Relief Bus, Alliance staff collected donations at our offices, and 21 Alliance CARES volunteers stepped up to help fill five buses, three vans, a box truck and part of a tractor-trailer with needed supplies.

United Healthcare/Optum, partners with Alliance and the Advancing NC Whole Health Coalition in NC Medicaid Transformation, also came forward to help, donating a large quantity of food, personal health items and cleaning supplies to a Salvation Army shelter in Cumberland County.

As floodwaters recede and volunteers and emergency workers leave, the need for support will continue, particularly for people who don’t have an inhabitable home to return to. Alliance will continue to work closely and provide mental health support as needed to the American Red Cross, which is managing the remaining shelters.

Alliance will also work with community partners and government agencies to facilitate rehousing, disseminate information and provide related supports. For many people whose lives will remain in transition for a while, the ongoing stress and trauma can take a toll on mental health. Alliance stands ready to assist much like we did during the Hope4NC initiative following Hurricane Matthew.

In Cumberland County, the CDRC started the Cumberland Strong campaign to serve as clearinghouse for Florence response such as volunteers and donations. Alliance will continue working with CDRC, which has reinstated its weekly meeting to address the Florence response as it continues to serve unmet needs for those affected Hurricane Matthew meeting twice a month.

Donation boxes for hurricane relief remain at all Alliance offices which will be collecting donations until October 3. On Friday Oct 5, each office will have a Cumberland Strong party to box up the collected supplies or delivery to the collection sites.

62 provider volunteers from eight of our provider agencies offered support at 20 shelters in our service area. Thanks to Carolina Outreach, Communicare, Easterseals UCP, Hope Services, Monarch, Renew, Touch of Grace, and Turning Point Family Care.
Save the date
Alliance All-Provider Meeting
October 17, 1 pm
Alliance home office

Talking Points

Phases of disaster response

Disasters affect people and communities in different ways. Sadness, grief, and anger are just some of the common emotions survivors may experience as the progress through the phases of disaster and recovery.

★ Phase 1, the pre-disaster phase: Characterized by fear and uncertainty with specific reactions depending on the type of disaster.

★ Phase 2, the impact phase: Characterized by a range of intense emotional reactions. Specific reactions may depend on the type of disaster.

★ Phase 3, the heroic phase: Characterized by a high level of activity with a low level of productivity. There is a sense of altruism, and adrenaline-induced rescue behavior is exhibited.

★ Phase 4, the honeymoon phase: Characterized by a dramatic shift in emotion. Disaster assistance is readily available, community bonding occurs, and optimism exists that things will return to normal quickly.

★ Phase 5, the disillusionment phase: A stark contrast to the honeymoon phase. Communities and individuals realize the limits of disaster assistance. As optimism turns to discouragement negative reactions may begin to surface.

★ Phase 6, the reconstruction phase: Characterized by an overall feeling of recovery. Individuals and communities begin to assume responsibility for rebuilding their lives, and people adjust to a new “normal” while continuing to grieve losses.

Learn more about the phases of disaster response at the SAMHSA website.

Alliance participates in National Night Out

In August, members of Alliance’s Community Relations Department participated in National Night Out celebrations in our communities. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign promoting police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. The event enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community and brings police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.

Top: The Alliance table at a National Night Out celebration in Cumberland County; bottom: a table at a Durham celebration.
“Team Alliance” was at Fuquay-Varina’s Out of the Darkness Community Walk in September to raise awareness and funds for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s investment in research, educational programs, advocacy, and support for survivors of suicide loss. The weather was beautiful and participation was strong with about 292 participants and 44 teams raising $28,666.00. Team Alliance made a huge impact raising $996.00, ranking fifth in donations. Becky Fescina, Community Education Specialist, ranked second raising $846.00.
### October 2018

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Columbus Day

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Halloween

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**Johnston**

**October 7:** Triangle Buddy Walk 2018, 1 – 5 pm
Archer Lodge Community Center 14009 Buffalo Road Clayton, NC 27527

**Cumberland**

**October 20:** Spring Lake Community Health Fair, 10 am – 1 pm
Spring Lake Recreation Center, 245 Ruth Street, Spring Lake, North Carolina 28390

**Wake**

**October 25 – 27:** NC Association of Licensed Professional Counselors Annual Conference
North Raleigh Hilton, 3415 Wake Forest Rd., Raleigh, NC 27609

**Johnston**

**November 17:** Clayton Turkey Trot to benefit Bob’s Buddies, 8 am – 6 pm
Clayton General Store, 10522 Hwy 70 Business, Clayton, NC 27520
[bit.ly/ClaytonTurkeyTrot](bit.ly/ClaytonTurkeyTrot)

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The Cumberland Strong website is a clearinghouse for people to provide donations and to volunteer to help the recovery process in Cumberland County. The site also provides a resource for residents who need help as they transition back to their homes.

[www.cumberlandstrong.com](www.cumberlandstrong.com)
Alliance Senior Vice President, Community Relations Ann Oshel, along with two other subject matter experts, will present on “Moving from Homelessness to Supportive Housing and Beyond,” at the i2i Center for Integrative Health “Visionary Voices” conference in December.

Oshel’s co-presenters are Terry Allebaugh, Community Impact Coordinator at the NC Coalition to End Homelessness (NCCEH), and Emily Carmody, NCCEH Program Director.

Their presentation will provide an overview of the homeless service system, what supportive housing is and how to engage landlords, as well as strategies to help a person maintain their tenancy and establish a quality of life. They will also present techniques for engaging someone in services and provide examples of two successful supportive housing programs including a partnership with a hospital system serving chronically homeless individuals.

Robinson to speak at MHPA conference

Alliance CEO Rob Robinson will speak at the Medicaid Health Plans of America (MHPA) national conference October 21-23, 2018, in Washington, DC. Robinson, who is on the MHPA board of directors, will co-present with other NC managed care organization CEOs on the topic “Moving Towards Integrated Medicaid Managed Care; Managing the ID/DD Populations: The North Carolina Experience.”

Oshel to present at i2i Center “Visionary Voices” conference

Alliance Resources

The Alliance For Action on Opioids website (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, 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 Behavioral Healthcare. Please send comments and suggestions about this publication and its contents to Lisa Brockmeier: lbrockmeier@alliancebhc.org.

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