



March 6, 2021

Dear Forsyth Family, Community Partner, Advocate, Provider and Others,

Partners is pleased, honored and humbled to have been announced by Forsyth County leadership as their recommended LME/MCO to serve the Forsyth County community. We feel strongly that our mission-centered, member-focused, provider and community collaborative model will serve the residents of Forsyth County well and will be the foundation of an effective partnership for the entire Forsyth system.

As we know from experience, change of any type brings questions, concerns and natural uneasiness. We have also heard of some of the questions you have. We wanted to take this chance to introduce ourselves to you and answer some of the questions we know are on many of your minds.

In the many conversations we have had with county leadership through their very thorough and deliberate due diligence process, we have agreed that the transition process should be focused on creating the pathway that is the least disruptive and ensures no member who is in service or needs services is negatively impacted through the process. The first step in that process builds from a very deliberate and purposeful reputation Partners has worked hard to create – a reputation of transparency. We believe it is important, even at this early time in the process, to offer information and outline how future conversations and engagements together can ensure success for those who need care.

We have included on the following pages some “Frequently Asked Questions” that we have heard you or others may have and from our experience in other county transitions. We also look forward to the chance to continued opportunities to hear from all and share more about our style, our model, and our commitment to you. Whether through joint meetings, town halls, attendance at existing forums and meetings, etc. we would welcome the chance to collaborate to ensure full transparency and success for those we serve.

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Elkin, NC 28621

Hickory Region Office
1985 Tate Blvd. SE, Suite 529
Hickory, NC 28602

We will continue to work with county management over the coming weeks and we look forward to working closely with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Rhett Melton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

W. Rhett Melton
Chief Executive Officer

Partners County Transition Model

Frequently Asked Questions

Providers

How many providers will Partners be looking to add to its current network to serve the need in Forsyth County?

Partners has a philosophy of a broad provider network, ensuring choice and access for members in the county. Though LME/MCO's are permitted to have a "closed network", Partners has never limited provider enrollment in that way. We welcome all providers who are in good standing with state minimum qualifications and will not limit entry to the network based on size of the providers or the continuum of services offered.

How will the process work to become credentialled with Partners if a provider is not currently contracted with them?

Partners will develop a seamless, expedited process to ease any administrative burden for providers wishing to continue to serve Forsyth residents and who are not currently enrolled with Partners. Partners will solicit the assistance of a provider advisory panel to help refine and abbreviate the application process so that it meets the needs of the state system and is "user friendly" for the partnering providers.

What will happen when rates currently paid to providers for services to Forsyth citizens is higher than Partners current provider rate?

All rates paid to current providers for services to Forsyth residents will remain the same. Providers will continue to be paid their current rates after the transition to Partners. If Partners rate is a higher rate, Partners will work with DHHS to create the opportunity to provide the higher rate to current providers. At a minimum, all provider rates will remain whole compared to where they are now.

Providers and Members

Will members be able to keep their providers and care coordinators?

Continuity of care is Partners' *top priority* for individuals receiving services in Forsyth County. It is critical to ensure that the transition process is as seamless as possible for members and their families. Partners will make every effort to employ current care managers who are supporting Forsyth County members; and, consistent with Partners' philosophy and model of a broad and open provider network, we will contract with existing Forsyth providers. We will also work to identify highest-risk members in care to provide them with additional support during the transition.

Will all service authorizations in effect at the time of the transition have to be redone and re-submitted?

In order to assist with continuity of services for members, Partners will honor all service authorizations in effect at the time of transition. Partners will work collaboratively with Cardinal to obtain current authorization documentation.

What will happen if Partners does not offer all the same “in lieu of” services that Cardinal offers?

Partners has reviewed the currently available “in lieu of” services offered to members in Forsyth County and are confident that there will remain the same or similar services after transition. Partners has many “in lieu of” services available to members, many the same as Cardinal. If during the ramp-up process any are discovered that are currently available and do not crosswalk to one of Partners such services, Partners will work with DHHS to have those approved as soon as possible, expecting to finalize before the transition date. Those that are currently offered by Partners and not by Cardinal will also become available to Forsyth residents at the time of transition.

Members

Do I have to do anything?

No. If you are currently receiving Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder or Intellectual/Developmental Disability services through Cardinal, and remain eligible for services, you will be automatically enrolled with Partners with the effective date of the realignment, should it be approved.

Does Partners limit the number of Consumer Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) members who are on the large CFAC team to one person per county?

Partners CFAC operates as an independent and self-governing group that provides valuable insight, feedback, suggestions and guidance to Partners’ Board of Directors and senior leadership. The CFAC membership consists of three members/family members from each of the current counties. There currently are no regional or county level CFAC groups. Partners supports the CFAC’s determination of the best structure to meet their needs and would support any additional regional or county level group if that was the will of the members. Partners has a very effective CFAC that collaborates closely with the governing board and leadership team. In addition, Partners’ Board has three CFAC representatives who are voting members of the Board.

Members – I/DD Waiting List

How will individuals on the IDD Wait List be impacted. Would they have to wait even longer?

When someone is already on the Innovations Registry of Unmet Needs/Waiting List in NC and moves to a different LME/MCO, that individual's date and time waiting is maintained and transfers to the new LME/MCO with the individual. Example: If an individual is a Cardinal member and has been waiting for Innovations since 9 AM on 8/1/2015, that individual would be on Partners list with that same time and date.

When the state has new Innovations slots to allocate to LME/MCO's, they determine that allocation on a per capita basis. Each LME/MCO receives a specific number of the new slots based on the population of the LME/MCO's catchment area. Likewise, when Partners has slots to assign to members of the waiting list,

these slots are offered to those who have been waiting the longest on a per capita basis. Each county receives a portion of the slots based on the county's population.

Community Stakeholders and Advocates

Will Partners continue to support local initiatives such as the work of MH, SU and IDD advisory committees?

Partners will absolutely continue to support the work of these groups. Partners' approach throughout our existence has been that a "one size does not fit all." What fits is what works best in that county. With those groups providing the current value that they do, Partners welcomes a chance to collaborate to help each achieve their purpose and mission.

Community

How can I get more information about Partners?

Information about the process will be posted on the [County's Website](#) and [Partners' website](#). Partners' website will also maintain a Frequently Asked Questions section to provide current information about the transition and respond to questions. There will also be other opportunities for interested individuals to learn about and connect with Partners throughout the transition period. More information will follow about community meetings, question and answer sessions, and other virtual and in-person transition events.