

MEDIA ADVISORY RELEASE

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UNITED PROVIDERS OF HEALTH WIN \$7 MILLION AWARD FROM NC DHHS Grant Funds Covid-19 Assistance for State's Underserved Community

Engelhard, NC – As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout North Carolina a conglomerate of mental health and behavioral providers will collaborate to assist minority and low-wealth individuals across the state to get the help they need to fight the spread of the disease. The North Carolina Department of Human and Health Services (NCDHHS) awarded a \$7 million grant to United Providers of Health (UPOH) designed to help mitigate hardships COVID-19 brings to marginalized communities. Minority and underserved Individuals across the state will receive food, utility and rental assistance and will be able to connect with primary and mental health professionals to address issues related to the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, as well as the mental health issues the disease may produce.

The UPOH, in collaboration with the River City Community Development Corporation (RCCDC), will host a series of events offering COVID testing, along with care providers and peer support specialist who can meet with individuals who test positive for the disease. Carolyn Mayo, a Founder of the UPOH says that many persons affected by COVID-19 experience anxiety, depression and may even have thoughts of suicide. "Primary and behavioral care providers and peer support specialists will be available for face-to-face assistance, and to follow up after-the-fact," she says. The group will also promote the Hope4NC 24-7 toll free helpline for people to connect with peer support specialists.

The First event took place the latter part of October in Lenoir County (Kinston). The second event, is scheduled for November 12, 2020 in Engelhard in Hyde County, North Carolina is titled "Community Day: People Helping People." The event is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the old Davis High School, 33478 US Hwy 264, Engelhard, NC 27824. In addition to COVID testing and other medical assistance such as cholesterol and blood pressure screening, food trucks will be available to distribute food to participants. Local government officials, as well as representatives from the police and fire departments will also be on hand. Subsequent events are scheduled November 19th in Pasquotank County and on the 21st in Duplin City. Events are also planned in Martin, Bertie and Hertford counties.

The UPOH is a network of independent providers, including primary care physicians and mental and behavioral health providers who collaborate to foster integrated care, sustainability, leadership and development training, and promote fiscal prudence and evidence-based practices. "We want to reach people who are in need in underserved, high poverty rural areas," Mayo says. "We hope to serve anywhere from 500-2500 people. That includes people we touch that day and then those we reach with ongoing one-to-one assistance."

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