



# PROVIDER COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

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## ALL NETWORK PROVIDERS

### NC Medical Board Request to Licensees

In partnership with NCDHHS and multiple stakeholders, the North Carolina Medical Board (NCMB) is requesting information about how damage from Hurricane Helene has affected medical practices. The NCMB is building two resources to support practices:

1. To help patients in affected counties access medical care, the NCMB is asking **licensees to notify the NCMB of the current status of their medical practices**. This information will be used to create an online database patients can use to find open clinics and help NCDHHS identify areas without medical services that may need assistance. Complete the [Medical Practice Status Form](#) to let the NCMB know if you are seeing patients, either in person or via telemedicine, or if you are currently closed. If your status changes after you complete the form, email [communications@ncmedboard.org](mailto:communications@ncmedboard.org), and NCMB staff will update your information.
2. Additionally, the NC Medical Society (NCMS) is compiling information about how practices have been impacted (financial, infrastructure, patients, supplies, etc.) to share needs with NCDHHS to support resource allocation. [Complete the NCMS survey](#).

For more information and resources related to Hurricane Helene, visit the [NCMB website](#).

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### Additional Medication Access Information

#### Recommendations for Obtaining Prescription Refills for Non-Controlled Substances

The rules below apply to all pharmacies and health plans, including, but not limited to, Medicaid services under the Vaya Tailored Plan (Vaya Total Care):

- Emergency rules allow people to go to any open pharmacy with their prescription bottles to get a 30- or 90-day refill on their medications.
- These rules also allow the pharmacy to refill the prescription even if there are no remaining refills.
- These types of emergency refill procedures cannot be used to fill prescriptions for schedule II controlled substances, which include pain medications containing hydrocodone or oxycodone and ADHD medications like Adderall and Ritalin.
- All health insurance plans that are licensed to operate in the state are legally responsible

to allow and cover prescriptions that are otherwise being filled “too soon” by people who reside in an area that is subject to an emergency declaration.

- It is okay for someone other than the patient to pick up the prescription. Some medications may require the person picking up the medication to have a copy of the patient’s ID, but this is not the case for most medications.

### Copay Guidance

Medicaid providers cannot deny services, including prescription drugs, to a Medicaid beneficiary who cannot afford their copay. All NC Medicaid-contracted providers, including pharmacies, are contractually obligated to follow Medicaid policies. This extends to Medicaid benefits provided through a managed care entity like Vaya.

For Vaya Tailored Plan Medicaid members displaced out of state:

- Our network is aligned with the Navitus Health Solutions national network. Tailored Plan Medicaid members can, essentially, go to any pharmacy in the country.
- We also removed the prescriber network restriction in case the member needs to see an out-of-state prescriber.
- Vaccines, including the flu and COVID-19 vaccines, are also available in the expanded network during the emergency response period.
- Vaya’s Pharmacy Operations Team recommends calling the pharmacy first. Some pharmacies/pharmacists aren’t as flexible as others. Members or their caregivers should take their prescription bottles and Medicaid ID Card with them to the new pharmacy.

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## Reminder: Route Resource Requests to County Emergency Management Agencies

In its Hurricane Helene Recovery Resources communication on Oct. 8, 2024, NCDHHS included a general reminder to channel specific resource requests to [county emergency management agencies](#).

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## Behavioral Health, I/DD, and TBI Disaster-Related Resources

NCDHHS has shared the following resources related to behavioral health, I/DD, and TBI needs in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene:

- Call or text [988](#) for mental health support from a trained mental health professional.
- Call North Carolina’s [Peer Warmline](#) (1-855-PEERS NC) to speak to a peer living in recovery from mental health or substance use issues.
- First responders and volunteers can call the [Hope4NC Helpline](#) (1-855-587-3463) for support.
- The [Disability Disaster Hotline](#) provides information, referrals, and guidance to people with disabilities and their families during disasters.
- The [Connections App](#) provides evidence-based support for mental health and substance use recovery.

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## FNS Replacement Benefits Available for Individuals Impacted by Helene

People in 23 western North Carolina counties impacted by Hurricane Helene who are enrolled in Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) now have access to replacement benefits on their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved North Carolina allowing current FNS participants in the 23 counties to receive 70% of their total monthly September benefit back on their EBT card.

The benefit replacement is automatic and does not require action from the FNS participant. This impacts more than 200,000 people in North Carolina and more than \$24 million in replacement

## Helpful Resources

- ReadyNC.gov: [Emergency Information](#)
- NCDHHS: [Hurricane Helene Recovery Resources](#)
- American Red Cross: [Reunification After Hurricane Helene](#)
- [FEMA Disaster Assistance](#)
- [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](#)
- NC Department of Environmental Quality: [Storm Response](#)
- NC Medicaid Resource Newsletter ([English](#)) ([Español](#))
- NC Board of Pharmacy: [Operating Pharmacies in Counties Affected by Hurricane Helene](#)

### NC Department of Public Safety (DPS) Resources:

- [Hurricane Helene](#)
- [County Emergency Management Agencies](#)
- If you are seeking a representative from the North Carolina Joint Information Center, email [ncempio@ncdps.gov](mailto:ncempio@ncdps.gov) or call 919-825-2599.
- [Learn how you can best help](#)
- For recovery resources for a resident impacted by the storm, email [IArecovery@ncdps.gov](mailto:IArecovery@ncdps.gov).

Why did I receive this email? Vaya Health requires network providers to subscribe to our Provider Communication Bulletin. For more information, reference our [Provider Operations Manual](#).

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