



EBCI TRIBAL OPTION

For Providers



May 2026 Provider Newsletter

What is the EBCI Tribal Option?

EBCI Tribal Option assists approximately 5,700 Tribal-eligible Medicaid beneficiaries, primarily in Cherokee, Haywood, Swain, Jackson, and Graham counties.

[Learn More](#)



CHEROKEE INDIAN
HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

ENRICHMENT CENTER PROJECT UPDATES

The IDD/Enrichment Center Project represents a significant and forward-looking investment in the health, independence, and quality of life for members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. It is designed to address long-standing gaps in services, including limited access to care, long wait times, lack of residential options, and insufficient day programming and support systems.

At its core, the project is about building a tribally driven system of care—one that reflects the values, culture, and unique needs of the community. This includes developing infrastructure, workforce capacity, and partnerships to ensure services are not only available, but sustainable and culturally appropriate.

The work includes building tribal infrastructure for an IDD/Autism program, creating a family resource center, improving access to assessments and supports, expanding meaningful day and residential options, and developing a strong tribal workforce to help manage and sustain these services.

**EBCI TRIBAL OPTION WILL BE PROVIDING MONTHLY PROJECT UPDATES
TO OUR PROVIDER NETWORK.**

**CLICK HERE FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECT
UPDATES AND INFORMATION**



Second Chance Month: Expanding Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Services for Successful Reentry

Governor Josh Stein proclaimed April 2026 as [Second Chance Month](#) in North Carolina, recognizing that most incarcerated people return to their communities and often face major barriers to employment, housing, health care, and reintegration. The proclamation highlights similar challenges for justice-involved youth, underscores the value of fair-chance hiring and community support in

reducing recidivism, and acknowledges statewide efforts such as the Joint Reentry Council and the [Reentry 2030 Strategic Plan](#) to strengthen rehabilitation and successful reentry.

In North Carolina, approximately 95% of people in prison will eventually return home; access to mental health and substance use services is critical for successful reintegration.

Many of the mental health and substance use initiatives driven by DMH/DD/SUS are especially crucial for justice-involved individuals. People can access same-day mental health and substance use supports through services such as the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#), mental health [walk-in clinics](#) and the [Peer Warmline](#). DMH/DD/SUS also strengthens recovery networks through [Peer Support Specialist](#) training, empowering those with lived experience to guide others. In addition, the division works with providers and community partners to close service gaps and fund programs that expand access to treatment statewide.

We also drive initiatives targeted specifically to justice-involved individuals. These initiatives complement broader mental health and substance use efforts and provide tailored support during reentry. A statewide mental health and substance use overhaul includes \$99 million for justice-involved services, ensuring treatment options are prioritized over incarceration.



[NCDHHS Selects NC ROOTS Hub Leads to Strengthen Rural Health Care Across North Carolina](#)

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services today announced the selection of organizations to serve as leads for the North Carolina Rural Organizations Orchestrating Transformation for Sustainability (ROOTS) Hub for the state's [Rural Health Transformation Program](#) (NCRHTP). Together, these organizations will work as regional networks connecting medical, behavioral health, and social supports as North Carolina increases access to care for rural communities across all 100 counties.

"Ensuring communities, providers, and stakeholders continue to be at the forefront of our efforts to transform the health and well-being of the more than 3.5 million rural residents in North Carolina is

crucial," said **NC Health and Human Services Secretary Dev Sangvai**. "By investing in strong regional partnerships, we are creating a healthier, more connected rural health system that serves North Carolinians when and where they need it."

The selected NC ROOTS Hub Leads are locally governed networks representing each of the [North Carolina Medicaid regions](#) that will coordinate care and implement NCRHTP initiatives.

The NC ROOTS Hub Lead awardees include:

- Impact Health - Region 1
- Trillium Health Resources - Region 2 and 5
- Vaya Health – Region 3
- University of North Carolina Hospitals – Region 4
- Access East, Inc. – Region 6

The organizations were [selected through a competitive process](#) to ensure they demonstrated the knowledge, experience, infrastructure, and capacity to serve as both the programmatic and fiduciary leads for their regions. These organizations will work with NCDHHS to finalize contracts by June 1, 2026.

Following a regional needs assessment, the NC ROOTS Hub Leads will establish local networks of partner organizations focused on strengthening the rural health care infrastructure. Over the next five years, tailored to their regions' needs, NC ROOTS Hubs will support rural communities by:

- Improving behavioral health and substance use services
- Enhancing care coordination across regions
- Leveraging digital tools to improve outcomes
- Expanding access to primary care
- Strengthening health care through workforce development

"Where you live should not determine your access to high-quality care," said **NCDHHS Deputy Secretary for Health Debra Farrington**. "Our selected NC ROOTS Hub Leads will bring together voices from across the state to deliver coordinated, impactful services that foster better outcomes and address the unique challenges our rural communities face."

This announcement reflects continued progress in the implementation of the NCRHTP. NCDHHS remains on track with its year one strategy, advancing the foundational infrastructure necessary to address immediate needs and support the program's sustainability.

Funded through a **[\\$213,008,356.47 investment from the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#)**, the RHTP is a statewide initiative led by NCDHHS designed to improve health outcomes, support sustainable access to care, and advance health care delivery for rural communities. The program will support more than 400 rural health facilities and bring hundreds of millions of dollars in federal investment to the state over the next five years.

North Carolina has the second-largest rural population in the country, and NCDHHS is committed to advancing innovative strategies through investments and initiatives that support high-quality care for all North Carolinians. For more information, visit the **[North Carolina Rural Health Transformation Program website](#)**.



May (anisgvdi) DhoŌEł is

Mental Health Awareness Month



EBCI TRIBAL OPTION

Native communities carry a heavier burden of substance use, mental health struggles, and suicide than the rest of the U.S. These disparities are real and so is our strength, resilience, and commitment to healing.

Ways to care for your mental health and help practice *ᵂ to-hi* (state of peace and balance):

- **Move your body:** Regular physical activity can lift your mood and support overall mental well-being.
- **Spend time in nature:** A short walk, touching the earth, or sitting by a tree can help calm your mind.
- **Talk with a healthcare provider:** Speaking with your doctor or a mental health professional can offer guidance and support.
- **Do something you enjoy:** Hobbies, creativity, and learning new skills can boost your mental health.
- **Prioritize sleep:** Aim for consistent, restful sleep each night to help your mind and body recharge.
- **Stay connected :** Time with family, friends, and community strengthens emotional well-being



ACRONYM OF THE MONTH

FNP

Family Nurse Practitioner

CHEROKEE LANGUAGE

May

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The Help Desk refers media inquiries to CMS' Press Office for response.

Visit the [Resources](#) page on the Open Payments website for many of the above resources.





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