

Changes made in how Trillium delivers services



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By Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy

Trillium Health Resources has changed in delivering services in its 28-county eastern North Carolina region. Change will continue.

Dave Peterson, Trillium's central regional director, delivered his ninth Trillium Annual Report to the Dare County Board of Commissioners on June 5, 2023.

Overall, total population across the region is 1.5 million. Trillium serves 45,988 people with severe behavioral health needs.

Two big changes are that those with low to moderate needs are now enrolled with one of five insurance companies that deliver services. The second is that in addition to mental health, Trillium is also responsible for physical health.

Trillium's client base of almost 46,000 are Medicaid enrollees or those without insurance of any kind. The annual cost for Trillium services is just about \$521 million.

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Trillium's patients in Dare County number 814 with 525 people diagnosed with mental health needs, 276 individuals with substance abuse and 110 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In order to provide physical health care services, Trillium has to arrange contracts with the 2,000 pharmacies in the region, with hospitals and with primary care providers who accept Medicaid. To coordinate physical health care throughout the region, Trillium has contracted with Carolina Complete Health.

Trillium used to have two different telephone lines. Now, the agency has call center phone lines for pharmacies, for providers, for nurses, for behavioral health crisis, and for members and recipients, which is the main phone line.

The agency now has care management teams for patients who might have visited emergency department in one of the 20 hospitals in the region or those in the juvenile justice system or rapid access care coordination for those patients who are really struggling.

As for project updates, Trillium received opioid settlement money, as did Dare County. Trillium spent money on Narcan kits and fentanyl strips to try to keep people safe.

The agency is responding to requests from sheriffs and from departments of social services to respond to calls when mental health episodes are reported.

On March 1, The Healing Place opened in New Hanover County. The 200-bed facility serves men and women with substance use disorder. The Healing Place provides detox services, an 18-month long-term recovery program and an overnight homeless shelter. When it was formally opened this spring, 125 beds at The Healing Place were filled.

Responding to commissioner Ervin Bateman, Peterson confirmed that Port Health Services has merged with Easter Seals, which provides services in North Carolina and Virginia. Peterson said that Easter Seals has a deeper infrastructure and hiring professionals may be easier.

In matters raised by county manager Robert L. Outten, the commissioners:

– Agreed to close the Old Swimming Hole on Roanoke Island due to dangerous swimming conditions and send the lifeguard position to Rodanthe's public beach access. The picnic area at the Old Swimming Hole remains open.

– Will send a letter requesting Rodanthe beach nourishment funding to U.S. Rep. Greg Murphy. Board chairman Robert L. Woodard commented that the county cannot afford a Rodanthe project because that would jeopardize future maintenance money for projects

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already initiated. Finance director David Clawson said the county could cover maintenance costs in Rodanthe.

- Donated a surplus van to the Lion’s Club.

- Agreed to add three income maintenance workers for fiscal year 2025 to handle the anticipated 2,500 applicants and possibly 1,800 newly eligible people once Medicaid expansion is in place.