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**Vaya Health Receives Award for its Microenterprise Program**

**ASHEVILLE, NC** - Vaya Health, a leading North Carolina managed care organization, is proud to announce that its innovative Microenterprise Program has been honored with a distinguished award, showcasing the impact its program has had on local communities.

The accolade, presented by the [i2i Center for Integrative Health](#), recognizes Vaya's outstanding contributions in empowering individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) through entrepreneurial opportunities. This groundbreaking initiative has not only helped foster economic independence for individuals but has also made a significant impact on local communities.

The Microenterprise Program, launched by Vaya in 2021, has helped change the employment landscape for individuals with I/DD. The program includes a Microenterprise Directory on Vaya's website that showcases the small businesses of its members. By providing a platform to promote their products and services, the directory enables these talented individuals to connect with customers and generate income.

"Many people define themselves by their job, but sadly, only 19% of persons with disabilities are employed, as reported by the US Department of Labor. Our Microenterprise Program offers an alternative employment option, empowering individuals with I/DD to create their own products or services and become self-employed microentrepreneurs," remarked Celeste Ordiway, Vice President of Transition and Housing at Vaya Health.

These microenterprises not only provide individuals with a source of income but also give them a sense of purpose, independence, and an opportunity to give back.

As part of their acceptance speech for the award, Vaya [showcased a video](#) featuring Jeremy, a Vaya member who shared his personal experience and success with his own microenterprise. The video captures the transformative impact of the program and highlights the importance of creating a supportive environment for individuals to thrive.

“We are incredibly honored to receive this award from the i2i Center for Integrative Health. It is a testament to our commitment to empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and our dedication to reducing the stigma surrounding this population, and instead working to foster inclusive communities,” said Celeste Ordiway.

“We will continue to expand and enhance our Microenterprise Program, making a lasting difference in the lives of our members,” continued Ordiway.

To learn more about Vaya Health’s Microenterprise Program and witness the inspiring journey of Jeremy and other microentrepreneurs, visit: <https://www.vayahealth.com/benefits-services/intellectual-developmental-disabilities/microenterprise-directory/>

### **About Vaya Health**

Vaya Health is a specialty managed care organization that oversees publicly funded behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability services across a 31-county region of North Carolina. Vaya manages Medicaid, federal, state and local funding to meet member and community needs while advancing whole-person health. Together with our members, provider network and local partners, we’re moving forward to a healthier North Carolina. Access to crisis assistance is available 24/7 at 1-800-849-6127. Learn more at [vayahealth.com](http://vayahealth.com).

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