

annual report

2024

sustaining & enhancing our work

With new staff coming up to speed and stepping up their efforts in 2023, our focus for the CARE Coalition in 2024 shifted to sustaining and enhancing existing services and collaborations.

Over the past 14 years, CARE and its partners have built a strong foundation spanning from prevention to recovery. Recognizing the importance of sustaining this progress, we devoted efforts to securing new funding, launching impactful programming, and strengthening our reach within the community.

In 2024, our jail-based program continued to be successful and evolved to better meet the needs of folks in the detention center. With evaluation to measure the efficacy of this program, it continues to be recognized as a cornerstone of local criminal justice efforts and is being used as a model to support others in our region and state.

CARE focused on building community capacity and readiness for opioid settlement funds. Projects strengthened and helped to grow the front-line capacity of our substance use disorder workforce, which remains critical. We also worked within the community to identify “hotspots” for overdose risk and families in need of support and provided resources and education.

In the midst of working towards new streams of funding to sustain our prevention work, CARE continued to support evidence-based education in our schools, Voice of the Students chapters, and parent education. Remaining committed to creating opportunities to better serve our youth, we assisted our local schools in addressing and responding to nicotine and drug violations.

Looking ahead, we recognize the landscape surrounding SUD and community needs is ever-changing. While there is growing momentum



around downstream efforts such as treatment, recovery, and harm reduction, we remain steadfast in also championing upstream primary prevention strategies. These initiatives are crucial for creating healthy environments for future generations, and we continue to hear their value echoed by our community.

As CARE's expertise in this field is increasingly recognized by local stakeholders, we will continue to leverage partnerships and collaborations to best serve Transylvania County.

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

415,612 media impressions

4,666 total hours of service

3,722 people served

\$475,000 operating budget

\$300,000 in-kind support
from community partners

working
together
to reduce
substance misuse



funding updates

PREVENTION

Our 10th and final year of Drug-Free Communities funding ends in January 2025. This decade of support has enabled CARE to establish a solid foundation for primary substance use prevention, strengthen youth protective factors, and improve parental awareness. CARE staff are working on multiple grant applications that will continue and enhance this work. For now, Transylvania Public Health is providing gap funding as they recognize the importance of these strategies to our community.

JAIL-BASED PROGRAM

Current COSSUP funding for our jail-based program concludes in March 2025, but CARE received another COSSUP grant award that will provide funding through September 2027. This grant will enhance the program, allowing us to serve in new and unique ways, offering jail-based and community-based peer support services.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT

Our grant from Dogwood Health Trust that supported development of the opioid response strategic plan ends in 2025. Transylvania County Commissioners approved an allocation from local opioid settlement funds for a half-time opioid response coordinator to identify potential collaborations, opportunities, and funding for strategic plan priorities.

accomplishments

These featured highlights and all of CARE's accomplishments this year were made possible by the collaborative efforts of our 40+ coalition partners.

CARE saw two significant milestones in harm reduction this year. Through a partnership with Blue Ridge Health, detainees at high risk for an overdose are now provided with a **Narcan kit** upon release. This helps close a much-needed gap as we know that folks are at a 40% higher risk for overdose in the weeks following release. We also focused on providing **Narcan kits and overdose education** at community locations that frequently interface with the public, including restaurants, gas stations, education, and recovery organizations.

We made an impact on workforce development by hosting a **peer support specialist training** here in Transylvania County. This training equipped 11 local individuals in long-term recovery with the skills and knowledge to use their past experiences to help others struggling with mental health or substance use, and expanding the local peer support specialist workforce by 120%. We remain connected with these trainees, sharing local peer support job opportunities.

We completed a PhD-level evaluation of the **jail-based treatment and reentry program** supported by CARE and the Transylvania County Sheriff's Office. The findings revealed a statistically significant reduction in arrests among individuals who engaged with the program's counselor or reentry specialist. The program also positively influenced the detention center's culture, leading to fewer rule violations. The estimated annual cost savings for the Transylvania County Sheriff's Office is \$130,582, highlighting the program's value both economically and in fostering long-term positive outcomes for participants.

our vision:

A thriving Transylvania County supported by programs and services that reduce substance misuse

project updates

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

- Partnered with WNC Health Network and Big Sea Media to amplify the anti-stigma social media campaign, #SeeMeWNC, resulting in ~250,000 media impressions.
- Sponsored 8 Behavioral Health Corner articles in the Transylvania Times, resulting in ~71,000 media impressions. These articles aim to address local topics in behavioral health, with a particular focus on substance misuse.
- Partnered with Transylvania County Schools to collect data on youth behavioral health and substance use.
- Coalition member Jim Hardy developed and delivered an educational presentation on substance use to the congregation at St. Philip's Episcopal Church.
- Partnered with TC STRONG to host a viewing of the "Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age" film, followed by a discussion to explore the impact of screens on families and youth.
- Partnered with Love and Respect Community for Recovery and Wellness to develop and deliver a community presentation geared towards supporting loved ones of those with SUD, "Recovering as a Family: Facing Addiction Together."
- Partnered with Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness to host and sponsor a peer support specialist training in Transylvania County for 11 local individuals.

Only 11% of students reported they did NOT get counseling when they needed it, down from 24% in 2021

TREATMENT & HARM REDUCTION

- Distributed 76 lockboxes and 262 disposal bags to community members and partner organizations.
- Distributed 64 kits of Narcan and administration training to local gas stations, community organizations, and restaurants.
- Facilitated a partnership between Blue Ridge Health and the Transylvania County Detention Center to distribute Narcan kits to high-risk detainees upon release, with 48 kits distributed in 2024.
- Served 61 new detainees through the jail-based treatment and reentry program, for a total of 344 participants to date.

NICOTINE

- Delivered the "Catch My Breath" curriculum to 500 students at Transylvania County middle and elementary schools.
- Sponsored "Vape Educate" licenses for Transylvania County middle and high schools.
- Trained 2 staff in tobacco treatment and certified 1 staff as a tobacco treatment specialist.

UNDERAGE DRINKING

- Provided education to parents via social media and community events on how to have conversations about alcohol and underage drinking.
- Distributed 58 bottle locks at community events.
- Completed alcohol purchase surveys and provided follow-up support for businesses.

97% of high school students say their family has clear rules about drug and alcohol use, up from 80% in 2015

YOUTH RESILIENCE

- Continued partnering with TC STRONG and SparkPoint as advisors for our youth coalition, Voice of the Students, focusing on building resilience and increasing protective factors.
- Staff attended Carolina Across 100 forums to enhance awareness of resources for supporting youth resilience.
- Trained 1 staff in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).
- Sponsored 2 community youth events to engage Voice of the Student members.

85% of high school students say they have an adult who they can go to for help when stressed or upset, up from 82% in 2021

about the coalition

Our mission: Empower collaborative partnerships in Transylvania County to reduce substance misuse by promoting prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts among youth and adults for a vibrant, healthful community.

The CARE Coalition of Transylvania County works to change community norms, reduce access and availability of drugs and alcohol, promote recovery, and reduce harm. The coalition convenes interested community members, facilitates collaboration, and coordinates efforts between coalition members and existing local resources. Supported by paid staff, coalition membership includes representatives from 12 community sectors including healthcare, law enforcement, social services, education, faith, and business, as well as parents, people in recovery, and other concerned citizens.

The “real work” of the coalition is done in project teams that focus on access to care and services, policy and enforcement, community outreach, and education. These project teams focus on implementing evidence-based strategies to raise awareness of substance misuse, build protective factors for youth, and change policies and environments in Transylvania County.

CARE is funded through 2 federal grants: the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Program of the President’s Office of National Drug Control and Policy administered by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Comprehensive Opioid Stimulant and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, as well as a Saving Lives from Opioid Misuse grant from the Dogwood Health Trust. In addition, Brevard ABC Board provides funds to support youth and family outreach. The value of in-kind support from our community partners and volunteers is valued at over \$300,000 annually. Transylvania Public Health serves as the coalition’s fiscal agent.

OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Chairman: Steve Pulliam, Rotary International (civic/volunteer organization)
- Vice-chair: Jim Hardy, THReCon (civic/volunteer organization)
- Secretary: Beth Hyatt, Healthy Communities (local government)
- Joe Cohen, MD, emergency physician (healthcare)
- Beth Ford, TC STRONG (youth-serving organization)
- Tom Jordan, Brevard Police Department (law enforcement)
- Julie Queen, Transylvania County Schools (education)
- Tara Rybka, MPH, Transylvania Public Health (local government, media)

GET INVOLVED!

- **Attend a CARE Coalition meeting**
Second Wednesday of each month, 1:00pm
Email carecoalition@tconc.org to receive a link to join the meeting on Zoom
- **Subscribe to our mailing list**
Email carecoalition@tconc.org
- **Learn more about the coalition online**
Visit www.transylvaniacares.org
- **Join one of CARE's project teams**
Contact us for dates, times, and more info






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2024 PARTNERS

- Blue Ridge Community College
- Blue Ridge Health / Meridian Behavioral Health Services
- Brevard ABC Board
- Brevard City Council
- Brevard College
- Brevard First United Methodist Church
- Brevard Police Department
- Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce
- The Children’s Center of Transylvania County
- Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club
- Co-Ed Cinema
- Dogwood Health Trust
- El Centro
- The Family Place
- Get Set Transylvania
- Gordon Family Pharmacy
- The Haven of Transylvania County
- Hope Coalition
- Henderson County Health Department
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- Love & Respect Community for Recovery and Wellness
- Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
- The Mediation Center
- Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC)
- Mountain Sun Community School
- MountainWise
- Operation Gateway
- Pisgah Health Foundation
- RHA Prevention Resource Centers
- Rise & Shine/Neighbors in Ministry
- SAFE, Inc. of Transylvania County
- Sharing House
- SparkPoint
- Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness
- Town of Rosman
- TC STRONG
- Roundtable
- Transylvania County Administration
- Transylvania County Department of Social Services
- Transylvania County EMS
- Transylvania County Library
- Transylvania County Parks and Recreation
- THReCon
- Transylvania County Schools
- Transylvania County Sheriff’s Office
- Transylvania Narcotics Task Force
- Transylvania Public Health
- Transylvania Regional Hospital
- The Transylvania Times
- VAYA Health
- Voices of Affrilachia
- WSQL Radio