



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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## **Local Primary Care and Mental Health Provider Connect to Offer Collaborative Care**

*Combined Services Fills Significant Medical Void in County*

**MORGANTON, NC (Feb. 18, 2014)**—Burke Primary Care recently expanded its services through a collaborative partnership with A Caring Alternative, a local behavioral health and substance abuse service provider, to better assess and manage mental health concerns in its patients.

The early February 2014 initiative promises many benefits of integrating physical and mental health in one location, at Burke Primary Care's office located at 103 Medical Heights Dr.

The combined clinic approach largely eliminates the need for referrals. Burke Primary Care's patients will be able to see their primary care physician and a mental health provider on the same day, in the same office, with no waiting.

"This is a great benefit for our patients," said Tim Robinson, MD, a partner in Burke Primary Care. "One of our biggest challenges is access to psychiatric care in a timely manner. This takes care of that."

Patients will have swift access to depression, anxiety, and alcohol and drug screenings; as well as brief interventions designed to prevent relapse of symptoms, promote smoking cessation and chronic illness management.

"We've changed the culture of physical and behavioral healthcare to a holistic approach that connects the mind and body," said Melaina Rhoney, president of A Caring Alternative. "In doing so, we're improving access to care, producing measurable health outcomes, decreasing stigmas associated with mental illness, focusing on prevention and early detection, and ensuring better health and wellbeing to Burke County residents."



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Historically, behavioral health services are provided in settings separate from where people receive primary physical care. This typically can mean that only part of a person's health is addressed. Providing one-stop healthcare changes this and resolves a longstanding issue of how to get behavioral health services to people who need it but may not know how to access such services.

“Providing integrated care makes sense. It improves patients’ whole quality of life,” said Granita Boyd, a licensed clinical social worker who serves as ACA’s embedded Integrated Care Clinician at Burke Primary Care. Boyd has been an integrated care provider for over seven years.

The collaborative effort is a part of Burke Primary Care’s on-going drive to provide higher-quality and more convenient healthcare to patients through Medical Home treatment strategies. Medical Home is a team-based health care delivery model designed to allow better access to health care, and increase satisfaction with care and improve health.

Burke Primary Care is the region’s largest and oldest primary care independent practice. Locally owned, it is a comprehensive family practice dedicated to high-quality, patient-focused healthcare.

Caring Alternative, founded in 2006, is a comprehensive care agency providing mental health and substance abuse services to adults, adolescents, and children in western North Carolina.

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