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### **Contact**

Mike Kondratick

703-999-2988

[media@eastpointe.net](mailto:media@eastpointe.net)

For Immediate Release

## **Eastpointe & Sandhills Center Announce Agreement to Consolidate to Become Second Largest LME-MCO**

BEULAVILLE, NC and WEST END, NC – August 10, 2023

Eastpointe and Sandhills Center have reached an agreement to consolidate and become North Carolina's second-largest Local Management Entity–Managed Care Organization (LME-MCO) based on population.

The combined organization will manage public behavioral health benefits for over 100,000 members in 21 counties. It will have a budget of approximately \$1.4 billion and employ almost 900 people.

The new organization will maintain its commitment to ensuring its members continue to receive high-quality care in their local communities. To maintain services at the highest level, Eastpointe and Sandhills Center will retain all of their employees and office locations. Eastpointe will be the surviving LME-MCO. The consolidated organization will be headquartered in Moore County and will operate under the Sandhills Center name until a new name is selected.

“Our members consistently rank Eastpointe as a high-performing LME-MCO. Our Tailored Plan preparation has been best-in-class. This consolidation ensures our approach to service delivery reaches more members at exactly the right time as North Carolina looks to expand its Medicaid program,” said Eastpointe Board Chair and Greene County Commissioner Jerry Jones.

Sandhills Center Board Chair and Hoke County Commissioner, Harry Southerland, noted that the combined organization “presents a tremendous opportunity to promote superior services to our members and meet the goals of the Department of Health and Human Services and our legislature.” Eastpointe and Sandhills Centers board members include 19 county commissioners. The consolidated organization will draw about half of its board members from each LME-MCO.

Sarah Stroud, who led negotiations for Eastpointe, will lead the consolidated organization as its CEO. “We are excited to join forces with Sandhills Center. This consolidation perfectly positions us to successfully compete in North Carolina’s changing Medicaid landscape. Our combined talent and geographic reach will give us an unmatched ability to deliver quality benefits and support our provider partners while also meeting the objectives of the state’s policymakers,” she said.

Anthony Ward led negotiations for Sandhills Center as its CEO. He explained that “this consolidation offers the best opportunity to preserve local management of services for individuals in our communities. It preserves the local connections with members, families, providers, and other partners that are a hallmark of the public managed care system in North Carolina.”

The proposed consolidation is subject to approval by NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody Kinsley.

The consolidated organization will serve Anson, Davidson, Duplin, Edgecombe, Greene, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Lenoir, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson, Rockingham, Sampson, Scotland, Warren, Wayne, and Wilson Counties.

### **About Eastpointe**

Eastpointe is a managed care organization dedicated to working with individuals and families in eastern North Carolina who struggle with mental health, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. In partnership with its providers, Eastpointe helps the uninsured and those with Medicaid, access the personalized, high-quality services they need. For more information, visit [www.eastpointe.net](http://www.eastpointe.net).

### **About Sandhills Center**

Sandhills Center is a publicly funded LME-MCO (Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization) committed to helping people to receive the best care possible for their mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders. We manage a network of service providers, we ensure the quality of services being provided, and we are a resource for behavioral health care information or assistance. For more information, visit [www.sandhillscenter.org](http://www.sandhillscenter.org).