



## MountainCare

MountainCare  
828-277-3399  
[connect@mtncare.org](mailto:connect@mtncare.org)  
[www.mountaincareservices.org](http://www.mountaincareservices.org)

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### **Local Senior Day Program Seeking New Location in Buncombe County**

**Asheville, NC** -- MountainCare Adult Day Services is seeking help from the community to find a new facility in Buncombe County. Since 1986, thousands of seniors and caregivers have been served directly by Adult Day, where participants benefit from socialization, activities, nursing support, and personal care provided in a safe setting during the day, while also allowing needed respite and support for their caregivers.

Previously known as CarePartners Adult Day Services, MountainCare has operated on the CarePartners campus since 1996 and was one of the organization's founding partners. Under CarePartners (and eventually Mission Health), Adult Day Services received operational support from the larger healthcare system and benefitted from financial contributions through CarePartners Foundation.

During the 2019 purchase of Mission Health by HCA Healthcare, Adult Day and several other non-profit service lines were excluded from the sale. Adult Day reverted to its roots as an independent organization and immediately entered a fair-market lease of over \$360,000 per year when HCA took ownership of the facility.

Fortunately, WNC Bridge Foundation (formerly CarePartners Foundation), generously provided transitional funding to MountainCare and several other entities as they exited the Mission Health system. "Funding from WNC Bridge has been key to our survival after the HCA sale, and throughout the upheaval of the pandemic," says Elizabeth Williams, MountainCare's Executive Director. "We are incredibly grateful for their support, which has covered the cost of rent in our first few years."

MountainCare's current lease and transitional funding from the Foundation are both set to end in January 2024. The cost of remaining at 68 Sweeten Creek does not fit with the program's non-profit business model long-term, and MountainCare is hoping to move to a more affordable location by 2025. WNC Bridge supports MountainCare's efforts to continue to secure program funding while working to relocate.

MountainCare provides a way for older adults struggling with cognitive and/or physical challenges to remain living in the community. For many, the support provided by MountainCare serves as the cornerstone of aging services. Participants can attend one to five days per week for four to eight hours a day. During that time, participants laugh, play trivia, dance, paint, eat, nap, and thrive. MountainCare

serves people who have a wide range of physical and cognitive needs and aids families with diverse financial realities.

Unfortunately, many adult day programs across the country are experiencing financial obstacles. Government funding sources do not pay for these services for most participants. In addition, the pandemic has created tremendous difficulties in finding, paying, and retaining qualified direct care staff. Yet programs like MountainCare are needed now more than ever to address our rapidly aging population. There are more than 70,000 adults over the age of 65 in Buncombe County, but just 1,794 skilled nursing beds.

“Relocating our Adult Day facility will be challenging, but it’s also an opportunity for MountainCare to grow when our county needs it the most. We hope that this change will make it possible for us to provide expanded and coordinated services from a more affordable site,” says Williams.

MountainCare is part of the visionary [Active Aging Center](#) currently being discussed at the county level, which may provide for a long-term solution benefitting the larger community.

In the meantime, MountainCare is asking the community to help identify potential new locations for Adult Day. Basic needs include an accessible entrance and parking, access to a kitchen, and at least 12,000 square feet of space to include multiple restrooms. Please contact MountainCare at [connect@mtncare.org](mailto:connect@mtncare.org) or by calling 828-277-3399. To learn more about Adult Day, or to donate, please visit [www.mountaincareservices.org](http://www.mountaincareservices.org).