FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Central Behavioral Health Breaks Ground on Claremont Flagship Building

Milestone celebration marks the beginning of a transformative project to expand behavioral health services, strengthen community connections, and support individuals and families

Claremont, NH – October 21, 2026 – West Central Behavioral Health, a nonprofit community mental health center dedicated to improving behavioral health and wellbeing for the Upper Valley and Sullivan County regions, celebrated a significant milestone on October 20, 2026, with a groundbreaking ceremony for its new flagship location in Claremont, New Hampshire. The event brought together community leaders, elected officials, partners, donors, staff, and supporters to mark the beginning of a project designed to address growing behavioral health needs and create new opportunities for individuals and families to access compassionate, comprehensive care.

"This groundbreaking represents so much more than the start of construction. It represents our commitment to building a future where everyone has access to the behavioral health care they need, when they need it," said West Central Behavioral Health's CEO Lori Shibinette. "Thank you for celebrating this first step with us as we bring Hope to its new Home in Claremont."

The new facility represents an important investment in the future of behavioral health care in the region. Once complete, the facility is expected to provide improved accommodation for both staff and community members, as well as expanded services for substance use, integrated primary care, and walk-in intake availability, among others. Together, these services will help ensure that more people can access the support and resources they need to thrive.

The project comes at a critical time, as communities continue to navigate increasing demand for behavioral health services and the need for accessible, person-centered care. Through this investment, West Central aims to expand outpatient mental health services, increase access to treatment, enhance care coordination, serve more children and families, and create a welcoming, recovery-focused environment.

The groundbreaking ceremony, held at the new building site located at 203 Broad Street in Claremont, New Hampshire, featured remarks from U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan, West Central President/CEO Lori Shibinette, Executive Councilor Karen Liot Hill, and West Central Board President Robert Hansen.

A resolution from The New Hampshire State Senate was shared by State Senator Ruth Ward in recognition of "The groundbreaking of their new facility, continuing their 50-year mission of supporting children, adults, and families throughout the community and expanding access to vital mental health services."

Letters were also shared on behalf of Governor Kelly Ayotte and U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen. A ceremonial turning of the soil followed the remarks.

“This project will not only enhance access to comprehensive behavioral health care but also reinforce the dignity, safety, and well-being of the many individuals and families who rely on your expertise and compassion,” shared Gov. Kelly Ayotte via letter. “On behalf of the people of New Hampshire I congratulate you on this significant achievement and extend my best wishes for continued success as you embark on this new chapter of service to your community.”

West Central would like to thank Warrenstreet Architects, HP Cummings Construction Company, Franklin Savings Bank, the community and City of Claremont, and our donors for making the project possible.

Construction is expected to be completed in 2027, with services anticipated to begin later in the year. Additional information about the project and West Central Behavioral Health’s services is available at wcbh.org.

For more information or to request an interview, contact Deb Herndon, Vice President of Community Engagement, at dherndon@wcbh.org.

West Central Behavioral Health is the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic for the Upper Valley, serving lower Grafton and Sullivan Counties. It ensures access to advanced counseling, treatment, and support for people of all ages, regardless of their ability to pay. With locations in Claremont, Lebanon, and Newport, NH, West Central serves adults, children, and families. It also provides mobile crisis response services that may be accessed via the New Hampshire Rapid Response Access Point by phoning or texting 988. Learn more online at wcbh.org.

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