March 25, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Watauga Opportunities Inc. is a private, non-profit, organization providing services to those people of Northwestern NC with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). Our organization contracts with LME/MCOs, the state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and local school districts to provide essential services to people with disabilities and their families. WOI operates IDD residential group homes, provides Pre-Employment Transitional Services to Special Education students in 10 counties (curriculum has been adapted to allow at home and equitable "virtual education" opportunities to EC students), and vocational, community and home services to people with various disabilities. Our services are governed and authorized under the North Carolina General Statute 122C-80 rules and are categorized as social services and medically necessary services.

Our staff are critical to the on-going services and continued operations of our organization. They are deemed “essential staff” under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s definition of “essential critical infrastructure workers,” and under the Governor’s COVID-19 Executive Orders and authorized to continue to travel to and from work to provide services. Please allow them to travel to and from their place of work during this period of reduced travel and community engagement. If additional verification of employment is necessary to permit this employee to continue in the provision of essential services, please ask to see their Watauga Opportunities ID card. Individuals with IDD have unique needs at times such as this when everyday routines are severely disrupted and the care that the bearer of this letter provides is necessary under the definition of "essential staff/workers."

Our staff are practicing the recommended standards of social/physical. Distancing, hand-washing, and limited outings.

Please contact me at 828-266-3689 if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

F. Michael Maybee
President CEO