

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD



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Ms. Heather Parker

Vice Chair

Mr. Fleming El-Amin

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Mr. John Blalock
Ms. Carmelita Coleman
Mr. John Davenport, Jr., PE
Dr. James Doub, OD
Dr. Palmer Edwards, MD
Dr. Brooke Griffith, Psy.D
Dr. Calvert Jeffers, DVM
Dr. Charles Massler, DDS
Dr. Linda Petrou, PhD.
Dr. Sharon Pettiford, DNP, RN, CNRN
Ms. Sharon Rimm, LCSW
Dr. Peter Robie, MD
Mr. J. Phil Seats, R.Ph., MBA
Dr. Ricky Sides, DC
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt, County Commissioner

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

MINUTES

December 4, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Heather Parker, Chair
Mr. John Blalock
Ms. Carmelita Coleman
Dr. James Doub
Dr. Palmer Edwards (virtual)
Dr. Brooke Griffith (virtual)
Dr. Calvert Jeffers
Dr. Linda Petrou
Dr. Sharon Pettiford
Ms. Sharon Rimm (virtual)
Dr. Peter Robie
Mr. J. Phil Seats
Dr. Ricky Sides
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Fleming El-Amin
Dr. Charles Massler

GUESTS PRESENT

None

Call to Order:

On Wednesday, December 4, 2024, the Forsyth County Health and Human Services (HHS) Board held its regularly scheduled bi-monthly hybrid meeting. Ms. Heather Parker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Denise Price
Ms. Christa Smith
Mr. Joshua Swift
Ms. Lorrie Christie
Ms. Tanya Donnell
Ms. Amber Humble
Ms. Nihya Payne

Moment of Silence:

A moment of silence was observed by all.

Consideration of Minutes:

The minutes of the October 2, 2024, HHS Board were reviewed. Dr. James Doub made a motion to approve, and Dr. Calvert Jeffers seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment Period: No comments.

Ms. Parker took a moment to recognize Dr. Peter Robie, who won an award for Outstanding Achievement. Dr. Robie thanked everyone and graciously stated it was for all the nurses and providers.

HHS Board Operating Procedures:

Ms. Parker stated that the HHS Board Operating Procedures needed to be reviewed and approved by the Board annually for Accreditation. Dr. Robie suggested that the wording on Page 8, Item 10, (Response to Public and Media Inquiries), be changed. After some discussion by the Board, Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt asked if they could revisit the Operating Procedures after the County Attorney has an opportunity to review it. Ms. Parker asked for a motion to approve the Operating Procedures, as is for Accreditation – the Board will review again in the future. Dr. Ricky Sides made a motion to approve, and Dr. Linda Petrou seconded – the motion was approved unanimously.

Deputy County Manager's Comments: Ms. Denise Price reported the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

HHS Strategic Plan Update: Ms. Nihya Payne and her team have taken the lead on the Strategic Plan. This has been a great opportunity for Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Public Health (PH), Behavioral Health Services and Bridges to Hope Justice Center.

Ms. Price stated there are three priorities on working together as a cohesive entity: Priority 1) how do we collectively enhance whole-person care; Priority 2) how do we reshape our culture; Priority 3) how do we integrate with our external partners. Ms. Price added, they will keep the Board posted as they move forward.

Construction Update: Ms. Price shared pictures of the work being done at the following locations to expand the continuum of care and create a more comprehensive ‘one-stop shop’:

- *Highland Avenue Center* – building a 16-bed facility-based crises center for adults – will be completed in mid-January and we will then start the licensure process.
- *Daymark Recovery Services* – Daymark operates the Behavioral Health Urgent Care. It will remain in the same space. Their open access outpatient services will move to the newly built out second floor.

- *Forsyth County Pharmacy* – Once Daymark’s open access services relocate to the second floor, a buildout of pharmacy space will make room for the Forsyth County Pharmacy to relocate.
- *Residential Facility for Youth Awaiting Transition* – this facility will provide trauma informed and therapeutic space for youth awaiting transition to a treatment facility to await transition to a longer-term treatment facility. It will prevent boarding in the DSS lobby and the emergency rooms. Hospitals and providers are very excited.

Dr. Palmer Edwards asked if this idea of a residential facility was brand new or did something exist before. Ms. Price responded it is brand new for us.

Dr. Sharon Pettiford asked if there was a certain phase of time and Ms. Price responded 3 months is about what is needed.

Dr. Sides asked if it was an inpatient facility. Ms. Price responded it is a residential 24-hour group home. Dr. Sides commented, not a hospital and Ms. Price responded no.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Director Update: Ms. Price reported the director position has been reposted.

Department of Social Services (DSS) Director’s Comments: Ms. Smith gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

- There is a vacancy rate of 7.9% agency-wide – their highest Division is Medicaid which they are struggling to fill – have some job fairs planned. The Family and Children’s Division is currently around 6%.
- Upgrades are underway for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) building compliance. We have public friendly space but do not have employee friendly spaces. Looking at automatic door opening and some other things.
- Advanced state-offered training was offered to DSS Interpreter staff at UNC-G on October 24-25, 2024.

Quality Aging Conference: Ms. Smith reported this is the second year – hosted in partnership with Senior Services and their Age-Friendly Forsyth’s Initiative at the Intergenerational Center for Arts and Wellness. For caretakers or older adults in our community, to come learn about aging in place. Have a resource fair that takes place, where they can engage with service providers, advanced directives, and practical workshops. Entirely free to the public – for ages 55+.

Special Assistance In-Home Program: This program allows people to remain in their homes, for longer.

- Cash settlement (fixed amount) – designed to be used on services that will help someone remain in their home.
- At risk entering a residential facility.
- Support services and income for people preferring to live at home.

- Comprehensive assessments to identify factors that would affect a person's ability to live at home.

Family and Children's Services:

- Adoption Awareness Month – November. Between June 2023 – May 2024, there were 28 adoptions; youths legally free for adoption = 64; not yet in adoptive placements = 22; resolution by County Commissioners was adopted.
- Performance Metric Successes – 100% of Child Protective Services (CPS) cases initiated timely in October; 100% of foster youth had face-to-face visits by their social workers.
- Allied 4 Outcomes Focus Areas – a consultant company working with the department on some process changes – external relationships; culture and practice philosophy; redesign of after-hours programs; streamline time-to-permanence (getting children out of Foster Care quickly and into permanent placement).

Economic Services Division, Medicaid, Child Support:

- Child Welfare and Child Care had successful audits.
- Success in food stamps and Medicaid programs.
- Beginning January – grant collaboration with Atrium will offer food stamp applications processing to maternity patients.
- Beginning December 1 – Energy Assistance applications for elderly and disabled population; January 1 for all other low-income.
- Operation Inasmuch Fall Outreach Event – held at the First Baptist Church on Highland Avenue, on November 16th.

Dr. Robie asked if for the home Assistance Program if there is a fall assessment where people are evaluated. Ms. Smith responded there is a whole person care assessment but not sure if there is a specific fall assessment. Ms. Smith will get back to Dr. Robie about this.

Department of Public Health (PH) Director's Comments: Mr. Joshua Swift gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

- Leadership Training – focus on leadership training in the department – 50% of total team members started since 2020.
- 15% vacancy rate, currently.
- H5N1 (Bird flu) – we are mentoring this - currently 55 cases in the United States that we know of. 7% of dairy workers have tested positive for H5N1.
- Helene funding to offset PH staffing to assist Western Counties – found out we are not eligible for this.

Community Health Services:

- **WIC** – the program received a budget increase of \$247,730 to be used from 10/4/24 – 5/31/25 because of increased client participation rates this fiscal year.
- **Food, Lodging and Institutions** – 63 vendors inspected at the Carolina Classic Fair; sent 4 team members to assist with Hurricane Helene relief efforts to Burke and Haywood counties – they assisted with restaurant re-opening inspections and assessing long-term care facilities.

Mr. Swift talked about data that Dr. Robie previously asked about regarding how many of our children get excluded from school because of noncompliant immigration requirements. Mr. Swift explained that in mid-September there is a 30-day window from the first day of school. On the first day of school there was 1,020 children excluded. On 10/3, three weeks later, there was 93. We do Saturday clinics before and the Saturday after and we went into the schools in the Spring. We targeted the schools that had the highest noncompliance in the past. Hurricane Helene extended that deadline further to December 2nd. We are checking on the final numbers. Dr. Robie also asked how many of our students had medical exemptions and Mr. Swift responded we are trying to get those numbers.

- **Vector Control** – this past mosquito season was the longest since the data has been collected. There is a specific name of a species of mosquito *Culex nigripalpus* - found 1,800 this year compared to less than 50 the previous 5 years. This mosquito is a carrier of West Nile virus. Mr. Ryan Harrison, our vector control expert, is nationally known for his work and has presented to the Board in the past. He has also written a paper.

Internal Health Services:

- **Dental Clinic** – we have a contract dentist, Dr. Malik Johnson, on Tuesdays and Thursdays; we have improved our ability to offer same day care for emergency patients and have reduced our wait-time for appointments; our dental care has increased to an additional 30 clients per week.
- **Emergency Preparedness** – Ms. Emily Austin deployed to the NC Emergency Management’s Regional Coordination Center.
- **EPI/Surveillance** – creating the 2025 State of the County Health Report (available at the April HHS Board meeting).

Preventive and Health Education Services:

- **Healthy Communities** – tenth Healthy Corner Store has been certified.
- **BeHealthy School Kids** – staff hosted two Family Fitness nights at elementary schools.
- **Minority Diabetes Prevention Program** – program launched a new group in Davidson County and graduated two cohorts.
- **Mentor Up Forsyth** – program is designed for new Public Health supervisors – October will be the graduation of our first cohort.

Personal Health Services:

- **Flu** – the department continues to provide free flu vaccinations for the community.
- **COVID** – vaccines are available for adults 19 years and older who have no insurance, and children ages 6 months – 18 years old regardless of insurance status.
- **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)** – clinical and healthcare staff are transitioning to American Heart Association CPR training.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Director's Comments: Ms. Price reported the following (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

EMS Overdose Data:

- 246 overdose responses, ages 1-93 – 1 fatal.
- Naloxone administered by 21 bystanders - this is very encouraging.
- top primary suspected drug (all ages): other/not able to identify (90), alcohol (79), Fentanyl (22), prescription drugs (22).
- zip codes in order with highest overdose calls: 27105 (41), 27101 (39), 27107 (26), 27103 (25), 27106 (25), 27127 (19), 27104 (14), 27284 (14).

Ms. Price shared a slide prepared by Mr. John Blalock showing overdose trending in 2024 YTD-September compared to the same time period last year. Total overdoses have increased by 7%; however, this has been driven by a sharp increase in the number alcohol related overdoses. Non-alcohol related overdoses actually decreased by 21%, which is very encouraging. The overdose death rate as well as total overdose deaths are also down year over year. Mr. Blalock reported that there have only been 24 deaths thus far this year compared to 41 deaths during this time period last year, thus representing a 26% reduction. He added that our community partners are able to explain why we may be seeing some of these trends including enhanced education and uptick of people seeking treatment as well as other local factors. The data for the graph came from Unseen Patterns. Ms. Price added that this is a wonderful and interactive tool that people are using and the total number of views on the site is up to 6,000.

Board of Pharmacy Inspection – the Pharmacy had a routine unannounced inspection visit from the State a couple of weeks ago. There were no findings, demonstrated the work that the Pharmacy does every day to maintain compliance.

Opioid Settlement – Ms. Price reported that Ms. Annie Vasquez has assumed primary oversight of Settlement functions. The annual county and municipal leaders session was held in October, have completed and submitted annual financial and first impact report have been submitted – had no expenditures to report on prior annual financial reports and because funds had not been distributed prior to FY24 we have not been required to complete an impact report before. We are also having quarterly meetings for those receiving funding.

Educational Opportunity: Ms. Amber Humble, Behavioral Health Services Supervisor, gave a very informative presentation on the Stepping Up Program. Ms. Humble started by reporting they were expanding Mental Health Court. This came about after the District Attorney's Office approached them about how many referrals, they were getting that were being approved by the District Attorney in the court. She added that this brought a lot of people to the table who had taken a step back. Ms. Humble stated that the Forsyth County Probation Officers were approved to get specialized mental health offices. Since its inception in 2012, it has always been a pre-plea court. Now they will be able to take post-adjudication or cases that can be supervised by probation. Ms. Humble said they still hope to some conditional discharges, meaning they will be supervised by the probation officers but if they complete the court those charges could be dismissed. If they are not dismissed, and they are just on probation and have pled guilty and is not something the District Attorney's Office is willing to dismiss, hopefully their probation will end permanently once they graduate from the court. Ms. Humble hopes this will get their referral numbers up. They will start on the first mental health cohort on January 8th and they are

very excited. Ms. Humble reported that her Peer Support Specialists, Ms. Pamela Goodine and Mr. Alphonso Thomas have been doing WRAP on the female side of the jail since January of 2022, and it has been going great. With the inception of the women's mental health program in the jail, they saw the numbers decline. The females receive group and therapy from the medical provider in the jail. Ms. Humble felt it was time to start taking this to the male population, especially the floors that do not have a mental health unit. They will now rotate between the female and male floors.

When asked what WRAP is, Ms. Humble explained it is the Wellness Recovery Action Plan and it covers the five key concepts of recovery. This is done by Peer Support Specialists who have been down that road and can relay to the people how they were able to get to recovery. They develop a plan about how to stay well and when things are not going well, what can they do to help themselves when in crisis. It is weekly based.

New Business:

FROST Committee Update: Mr. Blalock reported they had a great FROST meeting on November 20th. Someone from Stepping Up came and led a mindfulness exercise, which was helpful to prepare for the stress of the holidays. The next meeting will be sometime around mid-January.

Legislative Committee Update: Dr. Petrou reported there was no money appropriated to the Western Region. She added that 2025 will be the long session. Dr. Petrou also announced State Senator Joyce Krawiec has resigned and been replaced by Dana Caudill Jones for the remainder of this session.

HHS Board Member Shadowing – Moment of Reflection:

Before adjourning the meeting, Ms. Parker addressed a suggestion made by Ms. Carmelita Coleman at a previous meeting regarding not printing out the paper copies for the meetings, in order to conserve paper. Ms. Parker was not sure how they could do this, if some wanted a copy and others did not. It was suggested that when Ms. Lorrie Christie sends out the email asking if members will be at the meeting in-person or not for food ordering purposes, members can indicate at that time if they want a printed package or not.

Adjourn:

Ms. Parker asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Sides made a motion, and multiple others seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.

DP/lgc

Next Meeting: February 5, 2025 - 5:30pm