

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD



Board Members

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

Chair

Ms. Heather Parker

Vice Chair

Mr. Fleming El-Amin

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

MINUTES

December 3, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Heather Parker, Chair
Mr. Fleming El-Amin, Vice Chair
Mr. John Blalock
Ms. Carmelita Coleman
Dr. James Doub
Dr. Palmer Edwards (virtual)
Dr. Brooke Griffith
Dr. Calvert Jeffers
Dr. Richard Lord
Dr. Linda Petrou
Dr. Sharon Pettiford
Dr. Kenneth Sadler
Dr. Ricky Sides
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Denise Price
Mr. Michael Duncan
Ms. Christa Smith
Ms. Nicole Priddy
Ms. Lorrie Christie
Ms. Tanya Donnell
Mr. Valery Dambreville
Ms. Nihya Payne
Ms. Annie Vasquez
Mr. Landon White

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Sharon Rimm
Mr. J. Phil Seats

GUESTS PRESENT

Commissioner Grey Wilson

Call to Order:

On Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 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 5:32pm.

Moment of Silence:

A moment of silence was observed by all.

Consideration of Minutes:

The minutes of October 1, 2025, HHS Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Parker asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Linda Petrou made a motion to approve, and multiple others seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment Period: No comments.

Educational Opportunity:

Ms. Annie Vasquez, Substance Use Health Coordinator, gave an informative presentation on Behavioral Health Services and the current work that is taking place and what is coming next, with a focus on finding new ways to connect people to resources in the community. Ms. Vasquez stated they are excited to introduce a new collaboration between Behavioral Health Services, the City of Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks and Winston-Salem Transit Authority. Starting in 2026, they will be hosting monthly resource fairs at recreation centers across the city. These will take place on the third Tuesday of each month from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., making it easier for community members to access information, services, and support close to home. Ms. Vasquez noted that to build on that effort, they will also hold a Narcan training at the same recreation center the following week. Ms. Vasquez expressed their excitement about the partnership and the opportunity to show up more consistently in neighborhoods across Winston-Salem. They are looking forward to seeing how this collaboration helps them better serve the community and meet people where they are.

HHS Board Operating Procedures Annual Review –

Ms. Denise Price reminded Board members that the Operating Procedures had to be approved annually. It was approved at a prior meeting last calendar year when clarification regarding communication around media was discussed. It was decided by Ms. Price and Ms. Parker that to remain consistent in the month of approval they would ask for approval at this meeting. Ms. Parker asked for a motion – Mr. John Blalock made a motion to approve and multiple seconded. The Operating Procedures were approved unanimously by all Board members.

Deputy County Manager's Comments: Ms. Price gave the following updates:

Federal Funding Updates

- Ms. Price reported we had significant funding concerns around SNAP and WIC but developed solid plans for how to retain staff during the shutdown period – preparing to transition employees to vacant positions as appropriate and relocate to different work areas. Will also hear more from Ms. Christa Smith in her updates. We established weekly meetings with food partners. Ms. Price shared that the group discussed during their most recent meeting what to expect with kids being out of school/as a result of the upcoming holiday and impacts of some people going for longer periods of time between their November and December benefits being loaded because we got off-cycle in November. They decided today as a group that we are largely over the impacts of the shutdown. We are seeing a sustained increases in the demand for resources. Ms. Price added

they will continue to meet monthly. There is good data emerging, collaboration, and sharing of information. In addition to nutrition partners, the faith community is very engaged.

Annex 2

- *Winter Shelter* – Ms. Price announced that we are hosting a winter shelter in Annex 2. The building that abuts the new park has been vacant. The lease is with the City and The Dwelling is operating the shelter. Individuals can come at 7:00pm, have shelter there until 7:00am the next morning. Ms. Price said they have an agenda item prepared for our Board on December 18th to consider expanding operational hours during inclement weather so that people do not have to leave that space if there is no access to buses and/or libraries. Ms. Price exclaimed, “it is working wonderfully”.
- It is also working well as far as people getting access to resources. Ms. Price walks the parking lot in the evenings and has had people stop her to ask questions about where to get clothing or food – she is seeing this as a real conduit connection into service.
- *Next Steps* – Ms. Price noted we will be preparing for the permanent use of that building in the coming months. On an interim basis it is probably going to house our public health clinics when the remodel is occurring at 799 Highland Avenue.

Construction Updates

- *Dental/Annex 1* – Dental will be moving from Cleveland Avenue to Annex 1 – scheduled to begin the construction next month.
- *Mobile Integrated Healthcare Relocation/Annex 1* – Mobile Integrated Healthcare is currently sitting where Dental is going to be. They will be moving across the hall to where the Pharmacy used to be.
- *Public Health* – Design to support the renovation of the clinics is underway. Clinics will likely move to Annex 2 on an interim basis.
- *Social Services* – The lobby renovation will begin in January.
- *Highland Avenue Center* – Phase 1 of construction is complete. Ms. Price reported that they have not been able to spend all their State dollars for operational services at the location as a result of delays in construction being completed/delayed licensure of the facility-based crisis center. Ms. Price proposed to the State an alternative for the use of those dollars, for that space to make it even more functional and increase capacity even more – we are hopeful that the recommended revised budget will be authorized.

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

Agency Wide:

- *Vacancy Rate* – trending up a bit, attributed to Federal shutdown and seeing a few people retiring. Ms. Smith stated this normally happens at the end of a calendar year. The current vacancy rate is 8.85% agency wide with most in the Family and Children’s division (Social Workers) and in Medicaid Services (Eligibility Specialists).
- *Operations* – Ms. Smith reported the following: the roof replacement has been completed; the main lobby construction will begin in 2026 - a bid process has been completed, and contracting is underway for the lobby project.
- *Library Outreach* – Eligibility staff will be in the libraries (started in December), in parts

of the County not served by the bus line. Residents will be able to submit new applications and receive assistance with ongoing cases. Staff will be at the libraries one day per week in the following outlying libraries: Rural Hall, Walkertown, Kernersville, Clemmons and Lewisville. Medicaid and Economic Services will be there to take applications on-site or answer any questions. Ms. Smith stated they are also looking at having some available evening hours.

Dr. Palmer Edwards asked if the information getting out to the community will be prominently posted on the website. Ms. Smith responded it will be on the County website, and they are working with the Communications Department to, at the beginning of February, do a media blitz and go around to the radio stations. She added once operational, and they establish the most effective hours, they will increase promotion.

Adult Services:

- Shared a funding source chart called Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC). Starting to leverage well – in FY25, pulled in about \$80,000.00 and are on track to pull in double that for this fiscal year.
- The next chart shared showed cases increasing in two areas - Adult Protective Services and Special Assistance In-Home.

Family and Children Services: Ms. Smith introduced Mr. Valery Dambreville, new division director for Family and Children Services Division. Mr. Dambreville joined DSS on October 13, 2025. She noted that throughout his career, Mr. Dambreville has been recognized for his datadriven leadership, dedication to staff development, and strong commitment to community-focused outcomes. Ms. Smith added, Mr. Dambreville is very skilled at translating State and Federal mandates into locally effective solutions that benefit families and communities.

- Ms. Smith announced that the Child and Family Specialty Plan (CFSP) launched this week – the statewide plan is administered by Healthy Blue – Blue Cross Blue Shield. The goal is to provide wrap around services so that youth in foster care and those who have been adopted out of the system of foster care receive comprehensive wrap around services. Ms. Smith stated this means it is still underwritten by Medicaid but there will only be one entity providing services across both medical and behavioral health. Youth will not be using Partners LME as a day-to-day gateway into behavioral health. DSS will also have care management staff from Healthy Blue in the building to assist with needs of youth in foster care.
- As of October 31st – we had 223 children in foster care staying relatively stable since the summer months.
- In the first quarter, we had 32 child nights in the building.
- November – was National Adoption Month – celebrated 32 adoptions completed last fiscal year.

Economic Services:

Food and Nutrition (FNS)

- The first provisions with HR-1 for SNAP became effective December 1, 2025. Households will have to meet work requirements unless they have an exemption for disability, pregnancy, children at home under 14 or chronic homelessness. In preparation

for implementation of the bill, staff received training November 19 and 20, 2025. HR-1 will affect DSS administrative reimbursement next fiscal year. Beginning October 1, 2026 reimbursement will be reduced from 50% to 25%.

Medicaid Services Division:

- *NCFAST* - Entering 2nd year of facilitating the NCFAST Certification course at Forsyth Technical Community College. Nine individuals received their certification. This allows staff to apply for eligibility roles at their local DSS departments where they can substitute experience.
- *HR-1 Implementation for Medicaid* – the Federal timeline likely rollout date is January 2027. Work requirements will be added for the Medicaid Expansion population (aged 19-64) – exemptions will apply to those who are pregnant, have disabilities or care for young children. To maintain coverage, individuals will be required to participate in work, education, job training or volunteering for at least 80 hours per month and regularly report and verify their activities.
- *Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace* – Open enrollment for ACA health plans started on November 1, 2025. December 15th, 2025 was the last day to enroll in or change plans for coverage to start on January 1, 2026.

Child Support Services Division:

- Child Support Services will no longer establish an order for cases referred from Child Welfare, as of October 1, 2025 due to legislation in the Fostering Care in NC Act. Arrears that accrued prior to October 1, 2025 for pre-existing cases, will be collected but ongoing support will be suspended. DSS is currently creating a plan with the County Attorney's Office on how to manage getting the over 280 cases on the docket to get the modifications that are needed.

Department of Public Health (PH) Director's Comments: Ms. Nicole Priddy, Assistant Health Director, Community Health Services, reported on behalf of Mr. Joshua Swift. She gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

- *Public Health "Thank You Day"* - on November 24, 2025 – staff were greeted with an appreciation message and candy.
- *Federal and State updates* – minor impact for now.
- *Respiratory Illness Trends* – flu activity remains low and no COVID has been detected in wastewater but increases are expected this winter.

Vaccines:

- COVID vaccine is available, but supply is limited.
- Hepatitis B vaccine recommendations for newborns is being reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP).

Preventive Health Services:

- *Care Management* – 1,080 clients managed actively
- *Community Partnerships* – expanding libraries with Heart Program to all libraries for blood pressure monitoring and chronic disease prevention.
- *POSSE* – hosted a World AIDS Day event on December 1st.

- *Community Support* – Care Management donated eighty Thanksgiving meals to families on November 25th and Toys for Tots will also be donated.

Community Health Services:

School Health

- Prioritized completing student vision screenings before December holiday break (1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th grade)
- Students screened to date = 5,431
- Referred for comprehensive follow-up exams = 549
- Project Bright Eyes – community collaboration to expand access to vision care for students who fail screenings. Partnering with Lions Club, School Health Alliance, Project SEE, and In Her Sight Mobile Vision Care. Yadkin County has utilized this and had great success.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- Continues to serve over 10,000 clients in Forsyth County. Seeing an increase in appointment cancellations in the Hispanic population – expressing a fear to leave their home.

Dr. Brooke Griffith asked if we have the capability to do this by phone or video. Ms. Priddy responded yes, our staff are really great at being flexible.

Laboratory

- State Laboratory is updating to an electronic process for ordering specimen testing. Public Health Laboratory and clinic staff to receive training on the new process in December with expected implementation in January 2026.

Environmental Health

- 4th Annual Food Safety Forum was held this month – was well attended.

Personal Health Services:

- New Tuberculosis provider started in October, filling a new position. Provider will also serve as the consultant to child health, refugee and immunization clinic.
- Completed 1,255 visits and 735 flu shots in October.
- Begin successfully billing United Health Care in October. Completed paperwork for Blue Cross Blue Shield. Waiting for Medicare network.
- The Immunization Clinic state visit was very successful.

Internal Health Services:

Dental Clinic/Preventive Dental Health

- New Dentist, Dr. Lori Petree joined the team October 20th. Her addition allows the clinic to accept and see new patients, again.

Dr. Sadler asked before Dr. Petree started, who was in that position and for how long. Ms. Price responded it was a temporary position and that person did not stay very long, then we had someone that we contracted with for a short time. Ms. Price stated she joined Public Health eight years ago and they were recruiting for this position.

Emergency Preparedness:

- Our HHS Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Emily Austin’s last day was October 3rd. She will be working in the City/County Emergency Management (EM) but will still be working with Public Health as the liaison with EM. Region 3 had a cross county preparedness meeting on October 13th to share best practices and pool resources.

EPI/Surveillance:

- The 2025 survey was completed, and the team is organizing contingency analysis results into a format that is accessible.

Finance/Business Office:

- Began training on new procurement policies and procedures in November. The Business Office will provide training to Public Health staff.

QI/QA, Medical Records and Interpreters:

- Enhanced the Public Health phone tree to create a more efficient and client-friendly experience. Designed to ensure callers reach a live person more quickly and the appropriate staff with fewer transfers.

Vital Records:

- Processed 1,508 birth certificates and 952 death certificates in September and October.

Accreditation:

The North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation – Activity 38.1

- Requires the Board to review community health reports
- Creates a forum for the Health Department to communicate directly with policymakers about public health issues
- Supports the Assessment and Surveillance foundational capability

In your packets you will find COVID vaccination reports for 2024 and 2025 year-to-date. There is a lot less use of vaccine, both COVID and flu, compared to last year. The totals seen for 2024 will be extended till December.

Ms. Price explained to the Board that the reason these two items are being presented is because it helps us demonstrate compliance with Accreditation activities. You will also find it very interesting to see the data but it will still fill an Accreditation standard.

Behavioral Health Services Comments: Mr. Michael Duncan shared the following updates/charts (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Annual Overdose Totals:

- From September 1, 2024 – September 28, 2025, there was a total of 1,567 overdoses. These zip codes had the highest numbers (27101 = 314 cases; 27105 = 278 cases; 27103 = 185 cases)

Fatalities by Gender:

- Mr. Duncan reported there were a total 62 deaths in Forsyth County during the reporting period (44 males and 18 females). He stated that almost half of all male overdose victims fall between the ages of 45 to 64.

Overdose by Substance:

- According to the chart presented by Mr. Duncan, alcohol, at 509 appears to be the primary suspected overdose substance. Mr. Duncan noted that “Unknown Substance (375):” is any case in which the suspected drug has not been identified. In cases where Narcan was administered it means that the primary suspected drug was an Opioid. They are currently looking at how data is categorized to ensure information is presented in a useful way. Other substances noted were prescription drugs (153); stimulants (87); cannabis (47); over the counter (39); and depressants (11).

Stepping Up:

- On November 13th, held a graduation ceremony where they celebrated 6 graduates from the Stepping Up Program.
- On October 30th, a Black Men Speak event was held and featured a panel of speakers and live audience participation. Mr. Duncan noted that the event was well attended.
- Forsyth Focused – a stakeholder group that is working towards reducing deaths by suicide, locally. The group will continue to see responses to a Suicide Survey through the end of December. Mr. Duncan asked Board members to please share with their networks.

Substance Use and Prevention:

- Mr. Duncan reported that they have installed two additional Narcan wall units at the Comprehensive Treatment Center (CTC) and at Greentree Peer Support Center. There are now 9 units across the County.
- A Needs Assessment/Gaps Analysis is being conducted with Behavioral Health Services engaging a vendor, Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), to complete the work. HSRI was on site November 11-13, gathering feedback to inform the work. HSRI had the opportunity to meet some of the stakeholders in the community to gather data and learn from individuals. Virtual listening sessions will also be scheduled for December and January to continue gathering community feedback. A report to the County is expected around June 2026, with preliminary data being provided earlier to inform FY27 funding priorities.

Mobile Integrated Health (MIH):

- Mr. Anthony Davis, Paramedic, started with the MIH team in November. He and another new paramedic have both Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. They are now completing required skills demonstration and competency assessments with EMS. Mr. Duncan reported they are still working to fill the remaining Paramedic positions needed to deliver services 24/7 and then they will concentrate on filling the remaining Peer Support roles.

New Board Members Oath:

Ms. Parker introduced the two new Board members, Dr. Richard Lord and Dr. Kenneth Sadler who replaced Drs. Charles Massler and Peter Robie, whose terms expired. The new members were sworn in.

New Business:

FROST Committee Update - Mr. Blalock shared a quick update, stating that Ms. Vasquez had

already gone over a lot of it. He announced that the next FROST meeting will be held on January 14, 2026 (virtual). They will have some people coming from UNC Chapel Hill Street Drug Analysis Lab. Mr. Blalock stated although it had been mentioned before, it has been a while since they talked about this, but these labs use spectroscopy to be able to identify exactly what is in some of these street drugs. The thought is if you are a substance user, you can take a pill that you got into one of these labs and they can tell you exactly what you have. Mr. Blalock noted it is not going to prevent someone from using but it can prevent a death if people know what they are taking. Mr. Blalock expressed he would love to see something like this with our community. He stated the Lab has over 18,000 samples from 41 states – they are doing a lot of this type of testing. Mr. Blalock added, it will be interesting to hear from them not only from how we could use their services within the community but also to see in terms of emerging trends and what the makeup is of some of these medications.

Ms. Price shared that the data from the drug testing that UNC is doing is publicly available on their website.

Legislative Committee Update - Dr. Petrou gave the following brief update, stating Representative Sam Page will be running against State Senate Leader Phil Berger for the District 26 seat in the upcoming primary election– may have an impact next year whether or not we get a budget.

HHS Board Member Shadowing – Moment of Reflection:

Dr. Petrou went to shadow the jail yesterday along with Ms. Price and Mr. Duncan. Dr. Petrou also shared that she attended the graduation and it was very interesting to see the closeness between the graduates and their tight relationships. She added it is a very successful program. Dr. Petrou encouraged other Board members, if they get an opportunity to go.

Ms. Price mentioned the Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) for men at the detention center. The unit is voluntary. The men’s unit is limited in the number that can be served but, because there is not a separate unit for the women, services are open to all women. Ms. Price stated there is not enough space for a separate women’s unit, so it is available to all. She added if you look at the data of who is in the detention center, there is so much history of trauma amongst the women. They have a high participation rate, and they do not graduate per se, but they celebrate their journeys.

Mr. Fleming El-Amin shared he went on a tour of Public Health and the Department of Social Services. He thanked Ms. Smith and Ms. Destane Williams for hosting him.

Adjourn:

Ms. Parker asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Petrou made a motion and others seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.

DP/lgc

Next Meeting: February 4, 2026 - 5:30pm