

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

April 1, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Heather Parker, Chair
Mr. Fleming El-Amin, Vice Chair
Mr. John Blalock
Ms. Carmelita Coleman
Dr. James Doub
Dr. Palmer Edwards
Dr. Brooke Griffith
Dr. Linda Petrou
Dr. Sharon Pettiford
Dr. Kenneth Sadler
Mr. J. Phil Seats
Dr. Ricky Sides
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

STAFF PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Calvert Jeffers
Dr. Richard Lord
Ms. Sharon Rimm

GUESTS PRESENT

Dr. Art Kelly, Coordinated Special Care (CSC) Program for Forsyth County

Call to Order:

On Wednesday, April 1, 2026, 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.

Moment of Silence:

A moment of silence was observed by all.

Consideration of Minutes:

The minutes of February 5, 2026, HHS Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Parker asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. J. Phil Seats made a motion to approve, and Mr. Fleming El-Amin seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment Period:

Dr. Art Kelly, a retired local psychiatric physician with 36 years of experience in treating children, adolescents and adults. He shared that a significant part of his career was spent treating serious and mentally ill people in hospitals and in public health. Dr. Kelly addressed the Board, in support of the Daymark Recovery Services grant application, specifically their request for funds to support an important evidence-based program for first episode psychosis. Dr. Kelly stated he has been a member of the community group working to develop the program. He stated that Ms. Denise Price had been very helpful in helping them to organize and get the program in place at the Daymark, Highland Avenue office clinic, however, there is a crucial need for funds to fully develop the program. Dr. Kelly went on to describe the current landscape of the program to the Board and saying that the First Episode Psychosis (FEP) program is an early intervention model that can adjust trajectories of serious mental illness, the one that leads to lifelong disability. Dr. Kelly stressed it takes money, though sadly, only 40% of FEP program costs can currently be covered under current billable code, which is why the grant is being requested. Ms. Price commented that they are recommended for funding this year, but that the FEP program was not included in the budget.

Educational Opportunity: None

Deputy County Manager's Comments: Ms. Price asked that presenters define any acronyms used when going through their budgets, so everyone knows what they are referring to. Ms. Price then announced the following budget timelines and upcoming key dates for Health and Human Services:

- Department, Budget and Managers Office meetings were held for Behavioral Health on March 26, Social Services on March 31, and for Public Health on April 2.
- The budget workshop will be held on April 6 where they will hear about emerging drivers to the budget.
- The County Manager will present the recommended budget on May 7, followed by a detailed budget presentation on May 14th. Additional budget workshops are scheduled for May 21 and May 28. The Board of County Commissioners are expected to vote on budget June 4.

Current Budget Pressures

- There are several factors impacting the FY27 budget including (1) property tax revenue growth not keeping up with the pace of the growth, (2) sales tax revenue growth is continuing to lag following not meeting projected sales tax for the past 2 years, (3)

continued local fractures around education and insufficient funding from the state, (4) increasing operational costs, and (5) funding of services shifting from the State to the County.

- There are two primary ways we pay for what we do, (1) property tax, and (2) sales tax. Decreases and/or caps to these will impact local services. This could lead to reduced funding for schools or reduced investment in school facilities maintenance and public safety.

Department of Social Services (DSS) Director's Comments: Ms. Christa Smith started by stating that the mission of Social Services is to protect vulnerable children and adults, strengthen and preserve families, and enhance economic stability while encouraging personal responsibility. She gave the following FY27 draft budget overview, impacts, drivers, enhancement requests, and capital asset requests (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Budget Structure:

- Administration, Economic Services, Family and Children's Services, Adult Services, Child Support, and Medicaid Services

Budget Overview – Operational Improvements:

- Lobby Renovation Project – continued improvements to the lobby area
- Software Implementation – new case management software deployment for Adult Services. Procurement process is completed and pending Board of County Commissioner's approval.
- AI Phone Software – Procurement process is completed and pending Board of County Commissioner's approval.

Budget Impacts:

- *Energy Assistance Program* – the County payments to vendors were decreased by the State. No longer pass-through for payments for major utility providers – this will affect the program.
- *Special Assistance Program* – rates adjusted each January 1st using federal approved Social Security cost -of-living changes. Caseloads increased as NC Session Law 2021-180 removed program caps – all eligible individuals must be served with no waitlist allowed.
- *Medicaid Work Requirements and Eligibility Redeterminations* – beginning in 2027 federal policy changes will require certain adult beneficiaries to meet qualifying activities to maintain coverage. State is required to conduct eligibility redeterminations every 6 months.
- *FNS Administrative Reimbursement Rate Reduction* – the federal government reduced the share of SNAP administrative costs it reimburses to states.

Base Budget Overview:

- *Revenues* – FY26 Adopted = \$30,068,858 / FY27 Request = \$29,400,428 / Difference = \$668,430 / Delta = -2.2%
- *Personnel Expenses* – FY26 Adopted = \$44,348,215 / FY27 Request = \$45,934,050 / Difference = \$1,585,935 / Delta = 3.6%
- *Operating Expenses* – FY26 Adopted = \$13,462,868 / FY27 Request = \$13,184,995 /

Difference = \$-277,873 / Delta = -2.1%

- *Net County Dollars* – FY26 Adopted = \$27,742,225 / FY27 Request = \$29,718,617 / Difference = \$1,976,392 / Delta = 7.1%

Budget Drivers:

- Personnel Costs – increasing 3.6%
- Professional and Technical Fees – increasing \$60,000 (16.8%) – moving money from contracts into temporary help to prepare for surge needs in FY27 related to HR1 implementation
- Purchased Services – decreasing \$317,067 (-11.1%)
- Travel – increase \$6,834 (-1.1%)
- Materials and Supplies – decrease \$4,360 (-1.1%)
- Other Operating Costs – increase \$366,102 (4.0%)
- Capital Assets – decrease \$389,382 (-86.5%)
- Contingency and Reserves – no change 8,960

Enhancement Requests – 44 positions in five total enhancements = \$980,220 – requests related to Special Assistance:

- Special Assistance Cost Share – increase \$400,000
- 3 Social Workers – Special Assistance In-Home - \$252,670
- 1 Eligibility Specialist II – Special Assistance Medicaid - \$73,527

Special Assistance Data – see special assistance data charts comparing total cases statewide versus total Forsyth cases and total Forsyth cases versus total Buncombe cases, detailed in the Administrative Binder.

FY27 Draft Budget – Capital Asset Request

- Printer/Folder/Inserter with Document Software
 - automate high volume DSS mailings
 - centralize to mailroom
 - notices required to be mailed within 1 business day
 - estimated return on investment is to reduce by 1 full time position saving \$33,654 (minimum salary) annually

Social Services Draft FY2026-2027 Fee Schedule: Ms. Christa Smith presented the Social Services draft FY 2026 – 2027 fee schedule for the Board’s approval. Ms. Smith reported the three following changes to the fee schedule:

- Eliminating one item off the fee schedule because the program does not exist anymore.
- Paternity testing - fees are going up to \$26.00. This does not affect impact on everyone who gets DNA testing – it is the ones where the parent is court ordered to pay their DNA fee. This is representative of what the actual cost is.
- Adoption fees – the department’s own adoption in their system does not cost anyone. The department is required to have a fee schedule for what the court orders them on private or stepparent adoptions. Making a change to the \$100.00 – did a survey of surrounding counties and they raised their fees years ago to \$200.00. No one has come to us for one in over five years.

Department of Public Health (PH) Director's Comments: On behalf of Mr. Joshua Swift, Mr. Adam Pendlebury presented the following FY27 draft budget, detailing Agreement Addendas (AAs), budget drivers, non-AA grants, and expenditures (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Agreement Addenda (AAs): drawdown on a reimbursement basis – Public Health is reimbursed for what it spends on the program.

- *AA403 Women, Children and Infants (WIC)* – FY26 Adopted = \$2,002,236 / FY27 Request = \$2,054,181 / Difference = \$51,945
- *AA 151 Family Planning* – FY26 Adopted = 303,480 / FY27 Request = \$292,807 / Difference = \$-9,073
- *AA575 HIV/STI Prevention, Services and Treatment* – FY26 Adopted = NA / FY27 Request = \$55,900 / Difference = \$55,900
- *AA583 Refugee Health Assessments* – FY26 Adopted = \$133,240 / FY27 Request = \$6,600 / Difference = -\$126,640
- *AA116 Healthy Beginnings* – FY26 Adopted = \$80,000 / FY27 Request = \$78,672 / Difference = \$-1,328
- *AA551 Tuberculosis (TB) Control* – FY26 Adopted = \$78,882 / FY27 Request = \$66,749 / Difference = \$-12,133
- *AA452 Breast and Cervical Cancer* – FY26 Adopted = \$39,350 / FY27 Request = \$36,950 / Difference = \$-2,400
- *AA834 Nurse-Family Partnership* – FY26 Adopted = \$513,000 / FY27 Request = \$624,636 / Difference = \$144,187

Budget:

- Revenues – FY26 Adopted = \$12,235,571 / FY27 Request = \$10,842,858 / Difference = \$-1,392,713 / Delta = -11.4%
- Personnel Expenses – FY26 Adopted = \$23,046,791 / FY27 Request = \$24,488,024 / Difference = \$1,441,233 / Delta = 6.3%
- Operating Expenses – FY26 Adopted = \$4,292,089 / FY27 Request = \$4,299,218 / Difference = \$7,129 / Delta = 0.2%
- Net County Dollars – FY26 Adopted = \$15,103,309 / FY27 Request = \$17,944,384 / Difference = \$2,841,075 / Delta = 18.8%

Budget Drivers:

- Care Management - \$-1,043,304 – previous years budgeted full amount payments for this program. The department is reassessing and rightsizing the budget, aligning the request to actual revenues received, at a decrease of \$-1,043,304.
- School Nurse Contract – Exceptional Children - \$-455,776 – historically contracted with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WSFCS) for School Nurses with high populations of medically fragile or special needs children. Funds were sent from the County to WSFCS and returned to Public Health through this contract. Services will remain in place but eliminating the contract reduces revenue in the Public Health budget by \$455,776.
- Family Planning - \$-222,857 – for several years, Medicaid revenues have been flagged in Family Planning – this request is to right size this budget for FY26. Medicaid revenues are increasing compared to last year – in the first year of third party insurance payments –

anticipated to increase.

- Refugee Health Assessment - \$-126,640 – cap on amount of funds guaranteed to Public Health through this Agreement Addenda has been decreased – receives this revenue on a per patient basis and has seen a decrease in customers seen.
- Reserve Fund Balance - \$-301,663 – source of funding is unknown – possible keying error – funds not utilized last year – has been removed for the FY27 budget.
- Total - \$-2,150,240 – these budget drivers represent major revenue decreases in Public Health. Partially offset by revenue increases of \$757,527 in other areas of Public Health.

Non-AA Grants:

- *Governor’s Crime Commission* - \$250,000 – State funding to support the operation of the Forsyth WINS/Cure Violence initiatives.
- *Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health* - \$201,808 – funded by Guilford County to support the initiative to improve childhood health outcomes.
- *Novant Foundation/Duke Endowment Grant* - \$150,000 – grant to support minority health outreach in specific zip codes in Forsyth County – supports a position and operating costs.
- *North Carolina Alliance of Public Health Agencies/Thriving Hearts Grants* - \$65,000 – subrecipient of this grant. It supports 0.6 full time employee to provide pre/postnatal maternal support.

Budget Expenditures:

- Personnel costs increasing by \$1,441,233 or 6.3% (annualized increases – salaries, insurance, other personnel costs).
- Operating Expenses increasing by \$7,129 or 0.2% (maintained expenditures as flat as possible).

Public Health Draft Fee Schedule: Mr. Swift presented the Public Health draft fee schedule. He reported that State consultants were able to analyze our fee schedule and provide input on changes. New CPT and corresponding charges have been added to the fee schedule, and vaccines are a blend fee of the purchase rate and reimbursable insurance cost. Dental fees are a base of Ameritas insurance reimbursement rates, the only private insurance accepted at the Cleveland Avenue Dental Center. Environmental Health fees are based on an estimate of the cost of providing services.

AA701 Report: Mr. Swift presented the AA701 Report to the Board as required for the Child Fatality Prevention Team and as evidence for Accreditation – Activity G1.1.

Mr. Swift reported that the Child Fatality Prevention team would have their establishment or State offices, Children Prevention, under the Division of Public Health. All child fatalities must be put into the National Fatality Case Reporting System. There is a questionnaire that the epidemiologist goes through on deaths and there is a multidisciplinary team that includes DSS, Behavioral Health, the school system and both hospitals. The subcommittee of five reviews the deaths and deems which need to go to the full committee that consists of 20+ members. These members are appointed by the County Commissioners and are a robust group. Mr. Swift stated we are required to do this report. What we found most from the 2024 calendar review that we could effectively try to change is unsafe sleep and we have been dealing with that for years. Lastly, Mr. Swift said they were able to get \$6,000 and that is about what we get each year. With that, we were able to

do a really targeted social media campaign.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Director's Comments: Ms. Amber Humble, Supervisor, presented the FY27 draft budget on behalf of Mr. Michael Duncan. Ms. Humble shared that the 5 sources of revenue funding for Behavioral Health are: State Coronavirus Fund, Behavioral Health Funds (Maintenance of Effort – MOE), Opioid Settlement, County Dollars, and Medicaid (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

State Coronavirus Funds: Available for two months.

- Funds available from 7/1/2026 – 9/1/2026 = \$167,312
- Funds available for months of FY2027 for 5 MIH Paramedics, 1 Social Worker, 1 Supervisor = \$158,405 – personnel (State funded) / \$792,025 – personnel (Behavioral Health funded)

Behavioral Health Funds:

- Continuation Budget = \$2,867,892
- Behavioral Health Community Disbursements = \$2,000,262

Total Recommendation = \$4,868,154

- Stepping Up = \$741,294
- Director, Lead Health Educator, Sr. Office Assistant, MIH Peer = \$366,068
- MIH Paramedics, 1 Manager, 5 Paramedics, 1 Social Worker = \$836,558
- Operating Expenses = \$65,522
- Partners Health Mgmt. (MH First Aid Training) = \$7,500
- Advisory Committees = \$30,000
- Sheriff's Office – Women's Behavioral Health Unit = \$354,052
- Sheriff's Office – Men's Behavioral Health Unit = \$466,898

Total Recommendation = \$2,867,892

Behavioral Health Community Disbursements:

- FY26 Adopted – number of community disbursements (21) = \$2,115,171
- FY27 Recommended – number of community disbursements (20) = \$2,000,262

Difference – number of community disbursements (-1) = \$-114,909

FY27 Behavioral Health Community Disbursements:

- Community Care Center (Request = \$195,571 / Recommended = \$100,000)
- Daymark Recovery Services (Request = \$854,595 / Recommended = \$841,140)
- The Parenting Path (Request = \$10,00 / Recommended = \$9,000)
- Financial Pathways of the Piedmont (Request = \$30,000 / Recommended = \$21,521)
- Forsyth County Stepping Up Program (Request = \$10,000 / Recommended = \$10,000)
- Forsyth Technical Community College (Request = \$158,510 / Recommended = \$120,851)
- Green Tree Peer Support/Peer Wellness Center (Request = \$140,246 / Recommended = \$105,600)
- Green Tree Peer Support/The Refuge (Request = \$139,186 / Recommended = \$45,175)
- Mental Health Association in Forsyth County (Request = \$30,000 / Recommended = \$30,000)
- MentalRest (Request = \$67,440 / Recommended = \$67,440)

- Monarch – Psychiatric Services/Peer Support (Request = \$52,000 / Recommended = \$52,000)
 - Monarch/Studio 652 (Request = \$150,000 / Recommended = \$144,000)
 - Mount Jubilee Ministries (Request = \$49,700 / Recommended = \$10,650)
 - NAMI North Carolina (Request = \$9,600 / Recommended = \$9,600)
 - Nuestra Comunidad (Request = \$204,630 / Recommended = \$100,000)
 - Open Hearths Healing Minds, PLLC (Request = \$125,000 / Recommended = \$72,500)
 - School Health Alliance (Request = \$104,785 / Recommended = \$104,785)
 - Support Systems/Transportation (Request = \$340,000 / Recommended = \$70,000)
 - The Enrichment Center/Affiliate Chapter of Arc (Request = \$30,000 / Recommended = \$30,000)
 - The Shalom Project/Flourish Project (Request = \$56,000 / Recommendation = \$56,000)
- Total = \$2,000,262**

Applications for Behavioral Health Funding received but not recommended:

- Action4Equity = \$100,000
 - Crossnore Communities for Children = \$100,000
 - Insight Human Services (OS) = \$100,000
 - Pivot Counseling and Consulting Services = \$2,000,000
 - The Dwelling = \$84,306
 - Winston-Salem Rescue Mission = \$60,000
 - Winston-Salem Urban League = \$25,000
 - YMCA of Northwest North Carolina = \$60,000
- Total not Recommended = \$2,529,3067**

Opioid Settlement Funds:

- Anticipated that the County will receive \$37 million from Opioid Settlements over the next 15 years (FY27 - \$9,141,900 - Available).
- If more lawsuits are settled, additional funds may be received.
- FY26 Adopted - number of community disbursements (30) = \$4,508,775
- FY27 Recommended – number of community disbursements (34) = \$4,672,810
- Difference – number of community disbursements (+4) = \$+164,035

New Business:

Ms. Parker asked for a motion to accept the following items that were presented for Board approval:

- FY27 Social Services Draft Budget
- Social Services Draft Fee Schedule
- FY27 Public Health Draft Budget
- Public Health Draft Fee Schedule
- Public Health AA701 Report
- FY27 Behavioral Health Draft Budget
- FY27 Opioid Settlement Spending Recommendations
- FY27 Behavioral Health Funds Spending Recommendations

Mr. J. Phil Seats made a motion to approve all requests and Dr. Ricky Sides seconded. The items were all approved, unanimously.

Data Centers – Dr. Palmer Edwards addressed the Board about an article included in their packages on data centers and their impact on public health. Dr. Edwards started by mentioning Dr. Mandy Cohen, former CDC Director, who gave a recent talk about the public health impact data centers have. She is concerned that the digital revolution will occur at the expense of public health. Dr. Edwards shared that data centers already use about 1.5% of worldwide electricity, which will increase over the years to come. Dr. Edwards shared an article that spoke about Northern Virginia and all the data centers there. He added it is not very far from where we sit.

The concern is how little we know about the impact of long-term effects on public health. There is concern about air pollution, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter released from fossil fuel power plants and backup diesel generators. Also, the electrical systems are very noisy, particularly the backup generators and the HVAC systems. Dr. Edwards mentioned that there are large scale land-use changes, so that data centers are popping up here and there around North Carolina.

So, what are the solutions? Solutions include maximizing renewable energy sources. Another is to use battery storage rather than diesel generator backups and, water technologies exist to recycle water to lessen usage. Dr. Edwards reiterated what Dr. Cohen mentioned about the need for a regulatory framework to be in place, and how public health needs to have a “seat at the table” as these policies are developed.

FROST Committee Update – None

Legislative Committee Update - Dr. Linda Petrou shared that the legislature was not in session.

HHS Board Member Shadowing – Moment of Reflection - None

Adjourn:

Ms. Parker asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. El-Amin made a motion and others seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

DP/lgc

Next Meeting: June 3, 2026 - 5:30pm