HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

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Ms. Heather Parker

Vice Chair
Mr. Fleming El-Amin

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Ms. Carmelita Coleman
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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

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD
MINUTES
August 5, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Denise Price
Mr. Michael Duncan
Mr. Joshua Swift
Ms. Jennifer Tubbs
Ms. Lorrie Christie
Ms. Tanya Donnell
Ms. Annie Vasquez
Mr. Landon White

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Carmelita Coleman
Dr. Sharon Pettiford
Dr. Brooke Griffith
Ms. Sharon Rimm
Mr. J. Phil Seats

GUESTS PRESENT

Dr. Melissa Barbor, Duke Health

Call to Order:

On Wednesday, August 5, 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.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Ms. Denise Price reminded Board Members that the election of Chair and Vice Chair needed to be voted on. Ms. Price called on Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt, who is part of the Nominating Committee along with Dr. Calvert Jeffers to give their recommendations.

Ms. Whisenhunt announced that the Nominating Committee was recommending that Ms. Heather Parker resume the role of Chair, for another year. Ms. Price asked if there were any other nominations and then asked all in favor to say aye. The nomination for Ms. Parker to remain Chair was accepted unanimously.

Ms. Whisenhunt then announced that the Nominating Committee was recommending Mr. Fleming El-Amin to resume the role of Vice Chair for another year. Ms. Price asked if there were any other nominations and then asked all in favor to say aye. The nomination for Mr. El-Amin to remain Vice Chair was accepted unanimously.

Consideration of Minutes:

The minutes of June 3, 2026, HHS Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Parker asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Linda Petrou made a motion to approve, and Mr. El-Amin and Dr. Ricky Sides seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment Period:

None

Educational Opportunity: Ms. Annie Vasquez updated the Board on the Behavior Health Services Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis that was started last summer and has been almost a year since the study was commissioned. HSRI, a nonprofit company out of Boston was selected for contract via a RFP process. Ms. Vasquez stated that HSRI was wonderful to work with and came in August to share their findings. (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder).

Ms. Vasquez shared the Executive Summary and talked about a few of the recommendations that HSRI found:

- one recommendation was around people getting care before they are experiencing a crisis,
- another recommendation was streamlining crisis response – for a county our size, it was thought that we have quite a lot of crisis response options (e.g., MIH, the Bear Team, Daymark, Partners). HSRI suggested response teams working together versus independently. When you are in a crisis you may not be able to articulate what you need and if you cannot find the resources it could result in an escalating crisis,
- a third recommendation was to build a more cohesive behavioral health system. HSRI noted that we have a wonderful relationship with providers and talked about how great providers spoke about the County.

- their suggestion was to establish more coordinated efforts and to not have a meeting, just to have a meeting – need to try to streamline the process.

Ms. Vasquez noted page 2 of the summary where it talks abouts the different recommendations. Tier 1 recommendations were something the Behavioral Health Services team in Forsyth County can probably help with. She stated that Tier 2 will take a partnership between lots of people within the County and Tier 3 is advocating at the State level.

In the report, HSRI also spoke about MAT inductions in the detention center. Ms. Vasquez stated that the teams are discussing. Ms. Vasquez said the detention center is assessing what our resources are,.

Ms. Vasques shared that services are needed not only 9-5, Monday-Friday, but non-traditional hours also.

Dr. Palmer Edwards raised the point that at public meetings it is great that the County is supportive. He added that in the last few years you there has been a significant demand for the approximate $2,000,000 in behavioral health funds. The identified gaps will help to determine priorities for funding assuring funding is directed where it is most needed.

Mr. John Blalock stated the assessment was helpful and said some of the items identified were items that had been pondered. He had the same question about implementation and how we do that. Mr. Blalock added he knows this is helpful from the perspective of areas of prioritization for settlement funding. He believes there are a lot of opportunities and nuggets of information to explore a bit further with the data. The detention center MAT resonated with Mr. Blalock along with the navigation component because Forsyth County has significant resources, more so than a lot of other counties. He added that FROST is doing really great things so connecting all of these stakeholders together, at least you know they are networking and knowing what the resources in the community are.

Mr. El-Amin asked about Tier 1 – what would I say to those who want to start independently; how do we do that? Ms. Vasquez responded that is a great question – one of the things we really talked about is education both within the community but also provider education, useful knowledge that they can use. She added that we are planning to have some conversations about how we can do continuing education credits or how we can get some of the hospital staff that are verse in MAT to have conversations with other people. We are trying to partner with AHEC to do some continuing education.

One other thing Ms. Vasquez talked about was peer support. The report notes that peer support is not being used as much as it could be. It can function as a bridge. Ms. Vasquez stated that she is exploring how to provide education around peer support. There are peer support specialists, but they may not be being utilized in a way that is evidenced based. Ms. Vasquez thinks technical assistance about MAT as well as how to use peer support in different settings would be helpful. Ms. Price commented that the County can help with education – but will not be able to communicate to the entire community so it will be important to have communication partners.

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

Vacant/Vacating HHS Board Seats

- There are 3 seats that will vacate from the Board at the end of September. All they have agreed to the October meeting and serve until the seats are filled. The 3 vacating are: Dr. Palmer Edwards, Ms. Sharon Rimm and Dr. Linda Petrou. Ms. Price stated that we also still have the Engineer position to fill. Applications should open next week, and she will put this in her Sunday updates when they post, in case Board members know people who are interested.

Water Disruption Response

- Ms. Price thanked DSS and Public Health teams for their proactive planning for possible sheltering should the need arise, during the water disruption. The team was prepared for mobilize as needed. Teams also very quickly mobilized to work at water distribution sites, including leading the work at locations throughout the impacted area.

Program Recognitions

- National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards:
- *Wellness While Working*
- *Healthy Corner Store*

- NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) – Civic Excellence in Innovations Award:
- *Health and Human Services Recreation Health Resource Fairs*

Ms. Price added there were many other programs nominated and that the recognized sites represent the great work happening throughout HHS.

Department of Social Services (DSS) Director's Comments: Ms. Jennifer Tubbs, Social Services Division, Director, reported the following updates on behalf of Ms. Christa Smith (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Outreach Awareness Activities:

- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15th was declared World Elder Abuse Awareness Day by the Board of County Commissioners. The Department celebrated by decorating the HHS campus in purple ribbons and pinwheels and partnered with Bridges to Hope to host a ceremony covered by local news outlets on June 25th among other activities.
- Adolescent Foster Care Team-Up Event – a week long, yearly event involving staff and youth participants, to give them the opportunity to gain career readiness financial literacy, college tours, mentorship, and fellowship.
- National Fatherhood Awareness – to highlight best practices and strategies for engaging fathers that support safety, connection, and permanency.
- National Reunification Month – to highlight best practices in reunification.
- Media Campaign Recruiting Foster Family – working with Forsyth County Communications Department to develop a strategic and comprehensive marketing plan for

recruitment of new foster parents.
- Adult Medicaid Community Education – to help prepare the community, the Communications Department has developed an informational video and a one-page overview explaining the upcoming Medicaid changes. Resources are available on the HHS county website.

Technology:
- AI Contract – entered into a contract with Polymorphic to implement an AI software program, in June.
- Adult Services Case Management System – Pay-Go funds assigned by the Board of County Commissioners to be used for search and implementation of a Case Management Software solution. The Go Live is scheduled for December 7, 2026.
- PATH-NC – all 100 counties using for Intake and Assessments as of April 27, 2026. The second half will rollout on February 1, 2027.

Programs and Performance:
- Operation Fan Relief – makes free fans available to elderly and disabled adults who have health conditions that are adversely affected by the heat. The Adult Services Division serves as the provider.
- Crisis Intervention and Emergency Assistance – Forsyth County received $977,678 in funding. Have received a significant increase in requests for assistance. 1,392 households have been assisted. There is a significant need among Forsyth County households facing financial hardship and housing or utility instability.
- Adoption Promotion Incentive Funding – the Department received $100,939 to use for Adoption Promotions going forward.
- Federal Medicaid Changes – residents currently receiving Medicaid = 119,447. Beneficiaries will be subject to new federal work requirements and will transition from an annual eligibility redetermination to a six-month eligibility redetermination cycle, doubling annual recertification workload for the Division.
- Child Support End-of-Year Performance – continued dedication, innovation, and collaboration of staff have positioned the County as a high-performing program and leader in advancing positive outcomes for children and families in the community.

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

- Three Cyclospora cases in Forsyth County as of July 23, 2026 – from travel outside of the country.
- Respirator viruses and COVID are increasing across the South.
- Back to school immunizations are underway.
- 1,800 emergency department visits in North Carolina, this season from extreme heat.
- Measles – continuing to monitor outbreak in Buckingham and Cumberland County, Virginia.
- Nurse-Family Partnership cut in NC budget –NC DHHS has found funds to support through June 30, 2027.
- Care Management programs at risk of losing funding– funding is committed through December 2026.

Community Health Services

WIC:

- The new DSS located clinic has gone smoothly – staff there are seeing participants.
- Caseload – approximately 10,170 clients.
- Waivers allowing remote services expire on September 30, 2026.

Environmental Health:

- Vector program treated 825 storm drains and 26 acres for mosquitos in June – no mosquitos tested positive for West Nile virus since October of last year.
- Average wait time is less than 1 week in Onsite Wastewater for new lots.

School Health:

- Operation Zero Exclusion (OZE) – will continue on-site vaccination clinics at middle and high schools. Additional Tuesday evening clinics on August 18 and September 1, 2026 as well as health assessment appointments offered by School Health Alliance. Two Saturday vaccination and health assessment clinics being offered on August 29 and September 12 from 9:00am – 1:00pm. Exclusion day is September 9, 2026.

Internal Health Services

Dental Clinic/Preventive Dental Health:

- Recruitment in progress for a third Dental Assistant.
- Preventive Dental Health is recruiting for two Dental Hygienists. Looking to avoid disruptions in 2026-2027 school year.

Emergency Preparedness:

- New Emergency Preparedness Coordinator onboarded – Ms. Morgan Watson.

Preventive Health Education Services:

- Number of participants reached during 83 community based sessions – 1,433.
- Car seats installed – 63.
- Preventing Ongoing Spread of STIs Everywhere (POSSE) – conducted 847 HIV tests at outreach events.
- Care Management served 1,194 clients.
- Minority Diabetes – 75 participants in 8 cohorts.
- Men's Health 4th Annual Basketball tournament was held on August 8, 2026.

Personal Health and Clinical Services:

- Physician Assistant/Nurse Practitioner position reclassified as Senior Provider – this position will supervise other providers.
- Working with a billing consultant team to fully access our processes and to maximize revenue.
- Onboarding three Doctoral Nurse Practitioner students in August – will work on a 2-year quality improvement project.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Director's Comments: Mr. Michael Duncan presented the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Unseen Patterns:

- Launched the updated Unseen Patterns website to show related substance use and overdose patterns across Forsyth County. There is an updated Story Map and redesigned dashboard that includes a reference guide - https://forsyth.cc/unseen_patterns

Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis:

- See report summary presented by Ms. Annie Vasquez.

Harm Reduction Efforts and Outreach:

- Narcan Wall Unit – overdose prevention efforts have been enhanced by installing additional public Narcan wall units in partnership with Anchor Works and Novant Health. This brings the total to 19 wall units across the County, increasing community access to life-saving naloxone.
- Youth Programming – with evidence-based education on opioid awareness, overdose prevention, and healthy decision-making, youth prevention education has been increased through presentations at the Winston-Salem Street School, Crosby Scholars Summer Program, and Triad Restorative Justice, reaching more middle and high schoolers and justice-involved youth, along with parents and community members.
- Resource Fairs – engaging residents through community health and resource fairs – connecting community members while collaborating with community organizations and vendors.

Opioid Data FY26:

- Presented the following data (substance-related incidents = 1,981; Narcan administrations = 308; males nearly two-thirds of all cases; ages 25-44 with highest age demographic with 43 years old being the average).

Alcohol Data FY26:

- Presented the following data (alcohol-related incidents = 903; zip code with highest concentration of incidents = 27101 (245); males nearly 70% of cases; demographics = White - 51.7%, Black – 35.4%, Hispanic/Latino – 11.7%).

New Business:

Remote Participation Policy – Board Members must vote each year whether or not they want to continue with the Board meetings in their current format. Currently the meetings are held bi-monthly and are hybrid. Ms. Parker asked for a motion. Dr. Richard Lord made a motion to continue the meeting as is and Mr. El-Amin seconded. Board members voted unanimously to keep the meeting in the current format (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder).

Revised Public Health Fee Schedule – Mr. Swift shared with Board Members that after a final

review of the Public Health fee schedule, it was determined that three items were included that should not have been (HCPCS Code A4267 /HCPCS Code A4268/CPT Code S9442). Mr. Swift asked for approval from the Board before presenting it to the County Board of Commissioners. Ms. Parker asked for a motion. Mr. El-Amin made a motion to approve the updated fee schedule and Dr. Ricky Sides seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder).

FROST Committee Update – Mr. Blalock stated that he had little to add following the excellent updates provided by Ms. Vasquez and Mr. Duncan. He reported that the only additional update was that most agreements related to the 2026-2027 opioid settlement awards have now been completed. Mr. Blalock also noted that the next FROST meeting will be held in person on September 9, 2026 at the Highland Avenue Center and reminded the Board that August 31, 2026 is International Overdose Awareness Day.

Legislative Committee Update - Dr. Petrou shared that the legislature was out of session and will not return until after the elections. There will be days where they might have hearings but not really any business.

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 7:05pm.

DP/lgc

Next Meeting: October 7, 2026 - 5:30pm