

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

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Mr. Fleming El-Amin, County Commissioner



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Ms. Pamela Corbett, MA
Mr. John Davenport, Jr., PE
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Dr. Palmer Edwards, MD
Dr. Calvert Jeffers, Jr., DVM
Dr. Charles Massler, DDS
Ms. Heather Parker
Dr. Linda L. Petrou, PhD
Ms. Sharon Pettiford, RN
Ms. Sharon A. Rimm, LCSW
Dr. Peter Robie, MD
Dr. Ricky Sides, DC
Ms. Claudette Weston
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt, Commissioner

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MINUTES October 7, 2020

Board Members Present

Mr. John Blalock, Ms. Pamela Corbett, Mr. John Davenport, Dr. James Doub, Dr. Palmer Edwards, Mr. Fleming El-Amin, Dr. Calvert Jeffers, Dr. Charles Massler, Ms. Heather Parker, Dr. Linda Petrou, Ms. Sharon Pettiford, Ms. Sharon Rimm, Dr. Peter Robie, Mr. J. Phil Seats, Dr. Ricky Sides, Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

Board Members Absent

Ms. Claudette Weston

Staff Present

Ms. Shontell Robinson, Mr. Joshua Swift, Mr. Victor Isler, Ms. Tanya Donnell, Ms. Lorrie Christie

Guest Present

None

Call to Order

On Wednesday, October 7, 2020, the Forsyth County Health and Human Services Board held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting virtually. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Mr. J. Phil Seats at 5:30 p.m.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed by all.

Oath of Office -- New and Returning Members

The State of North Carolina, County of Forsyth, Oath of Office of the Forsyth County Health and Human Services Board was given to new member, Dr. James Doub and returning members, Mr.

John Davenport, Mr. J. Phil Seats, and Dr. Ricky Sides. Each member was sworn in by Notary Public, Tanya Donnell.

Consideration of Board Minutes for September 2, 2020

The minutes from the September 2, 2020 Health and Human Services Virtual Board Meeting were reviewed. Ms. Whisenhunt made a motion to approve and Dr. Massler seconded the motion. A quorum was present. The motion carried and the minutes were approved with 16 votes in favor.

Deputy County Manager's Comments – Ms. Shontell Robinson *(Complete- detailed handouts on file in the Administrative Binder)*

Cardinal Challenges

Ms. Robinson reported that the main issues with Cardinal is around the timeliness of their authorizations and the level of care they end up approving or not approving. There are also network issues. Mr. Isler and Dr. Martin continue to have ongoing conversations with Cardinal as well as the State. They have met with Dave Richard who is the Deputy Secretary for NC Medicaid at DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services). The last meeting included Representative Donny Lambeth. There has been a hard push for Cardinal to make some changes. Ms. Robinson has little optimism that there will be a change due to the way Cardinal's business model is written.

Forsyth County is teamed up with other counties to attempt to address some of the issues with Cardinal. This unified effort may encourage improvements in their system. Advocates and citizens in the community who need services have requested a meeting with the Commissioners next week to discuss the concerns they are having with Cardinal.

This issue remains a top priority. Cardinal is needed; however, if there are no improvements, the county will have to look at doing something different. Ms. Robinson will keep this as a standing topic.

Gun/Gang Violence

There is a gun/gang violence team in Forsyth County which includes Commissioner Fleming El Amin and Commissioner Tonya McDaniel. Staff are no longer a part of the team since it deals mostly with policy. The Commissioners approved \$100,000.00 to go towards gun gang violence programming. It will be worked through with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Ms. Robinson, Commissioner El Amin, Mr. Thacker on Mr. Isler's behalf, Mr. Lo Giudice on Mr. Swift's behalf and other members in the community serve on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Ms. Robinson has brought this to the HHS board's attention since it involves human services.

There is also a joint team working together from the City of Winston-Salem, the Winston Salem Police Department, the School Health Alliance, the Forsyth County Department of Social Services, the Forsyth County Department of Public Health, and the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department. The team is working together to figure out other things to do to help with the issues.

Jail Health RFP (Request for Proposal)

The contract with Wellpath expires on August 31, 2021. Ms. Robinson has begun working on an RFP (Request for Proposal) process for jail health. This team consists of Ms. Robinson, members

of the Forsyth County Department of Public Health, the Forsyth County Sheriff's office, and the Forsyth County Manager's office. The team is hoping to receive assistance from Wake Forest Baptist Health when it is time to evaluate the proposal. The goal is to issue the RFP by next month. Please note: The County has continued to ask Novant and Baptist Hospitals to provide jail health services. Ms. Robinson and Mr. Watts will meet with Baptist next week.

Ms. Whisenhunt shared that when the previous RFP (Request for Proposal) was issued by the Commissioners, Wellpath was the only entity that applied.

Budget

The sales tax projection is better than expected through COVID. All departments had to take a budget reduction. Also, there has been a soft hiring freeze. Only the most necessary positions were filled in order to avoid a budget crisis. The Commissioners are starting to review the budget. Public Health and DSS may have some funds restored.

Forsyth County Courthouse

The Forsyth County Courthouse operations may be limited for a while due to positive Coronavirus cases. Public Health is currently conducting contact tracing.

Dr. Robie asked if Ms. Lindsay Novacek will play a role in the jail health RFP process? Ms. Robinson responded, yes, she is an integral part of the team.

Dr. Edwards asked Ms. Robinson to put the gun/gang violence issue in perspective? Ms. Robinson responded that it is increasing, especially in juveniles and it seems to be worse since school is out. The juveniles are also involved in more serious crimes.

Dr. Massler asked if Cardinal is in compliance with their contract? Ms. Robinson responded that Cardinal's contract is really with the State. The State is responsible for holding Cardinal accountable. In terms of performance metrics, Cardinal is one of the worst in the State according to NCDHHS's performance measures.

Director of Public Health Comments – Mr. Joshua Swift

(Complete- detailed handouts on file in the Administrative Binder)

COVID-19 Update

Testing

Mr. Swift reported that Public Health is working to expand opportunities for testing. There will be 16 testing events in October; working to coordinate with StarMed. The focus continues on priority zip codes, 27101, 27105, and 27107. Mr. Swift is also attending bi-weekly meetings with partners, which are Novant, Baptist, Community Health Center, and FQAC in the division of public health. The discussions are around reducing factors that could limit outreach and testing.

Also focusing on doing some testing outside of the city in Lewisville, Friday, 10/9 from 3:00-6:00 p.m.; Kernersville, Friday, 10/16 from 3:00-6:00 p.m.; at the WSTA (Winston Salem Transit Authority) depot downtown on 10/13 and 10/27. Every Monday testing is also offered at the Winston Lake YMCA from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The first one was well attended. Recently testing was held at Shiloh Baptist Church and Winston Salem State University.

Tracing

Continuing to use staff from CCNC (Community Care of North Carolina) for tracing. Thirty contact tracers from the State have been conducting searches for Forsyth County. Some of the contact tracers are designated solely to universities and public-school systems to provide more effective tracing.

Trends

Trends continue to be monitored for the incidence rates, percentages positive, and hospitalizations for COVID-19 in the area.

Partners

Mr. Swift and the team have been meeting with the Division of Public Health biweekly. They are also, meeting and with community partners weekly and biweekly; this includes Public Safety, public schools and universities, private schools, and hospitals.

Phase 3

Mr. Swift and the team are continuing to assess Phase 3 to see if it will lead to increased case count. It will take approximately 10 to 15 days to determine. There is some concern regarding opening places i.e. bars and schools. Mr. Swift, Dr. Ohl, Dr. Lovette Miller and Ms. Glenda Dancy presented information to the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School Board. The school board decided to go with plan B opening which is based on the percentage positive over a 10-day rolling average. Mr. Swift is providing the most up-to-date data so they will be able to make informed decisions.

Vaccine

A tabletop social distancing exercise with 40 plus participants to discuss vaccines was held at the Benton Convention Center with Emergency Management, all universities, hospital systems, school systems and partners. They will begin working on the four scenarios: high supply vaccine with high demand, high supply vaccine with low demand (the public is not willing to take it), low supply with a high demand, and a low supply with a low demand.

Mr. Swift reported that there may be small shipments within the next month which will be reserved for essential staff, long-term care facilities, resident and health care workers. The vaccine may come in two doses. When the first vaccine is received, the second part of the vaccine has to be reserved for the citizen for 21 to 28 days in order to receive the same lot number from the same manufacturer.

Cold Train Management

There are three categories: Refrigeration, freezer, and freezer at ultra-low temperature. The vaccine will be shipped in containers that will hold the temperature for up to approximately five days. Dr. David Priest with Novant has offered to assist with storage if needed.

Mr. Swift shared a summary of statistics for Forsyth County, NC COVID-19 tests as of October 3, 2020. Cases based on gender are trending more in females. The age demographic; 30 percent of cases are under age 25, 48 percent of cases are under age 35. The concern is in younger people who have no to mild symptoms then take it home or come in contact with someone in the public. In other respiratory illnesses children are carriers. Mr. Swift shared that he feels comfortable with the methodical approach the school system is taking and the fact that they are doing cohorts of student to maintain social distancing.

Race Ethnicity

The Hispanic community continues to be the highest affected; however, the numbers have drastically decreased from 70% down to 44%; Caucasian is at 26% and African American is at 16%.

Testing Numbers

The data from the State shows an average of 8000 tests per week have been administered in Forsyth County.

Testing by Zip Codes

Mr. Swift shared the total distribution by the zip code. The primary focus for testing is on zip codes 27101, 27105, and 27107, rotating weekly on Tuesday and Saturday mornings.

Percent Positive

The percentage is based on a 2-day rolling average. The numbers are slightly trending up; numbers were very high in May and June (15% or more). Mid-September was the lowest point, now numbers are at approximately 5%.

Deaths

The Forsyth County death rate is at 1.5%. Deaths are recorded by gender and age (predominantly in ages 65 and older). Mr. Swift shared that Forsyth County is fortunate compared to other counties to only have 42 deaths in long-term care facilities which is less than 40%. School nurses were assigned to daycare centers and long-term care facilities to provide education. The education provided to staff in those facilities has helped them prepare to handle any cases. Most of the deaths are in White then Black followed by Hispanic/Latino.

Mr. Seats asked if the Slow COVID NC app is being used? Mr. Swift responded that they have tried to make people aware of it. Initially, it was created for college campuses, now it has been shared across the state. Mr. Swift also shared that it has been pushed on media outlets. The number of downloads has not been shared by the state. The app notifies you that you are in touch with someone who is positive; it does not give specific identifying information.

Mr. Seats shared that the Slow COVID NC app changes tokens with each other that last for up to 14 days. The information is stored with DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services) and it will notify other users within a six-foot radius.

Director of Social Services Comments – Mr. Victor Isler

(Complete- detailed handouts on file in the Administrative Binder)

COVID-19 Update

Statewide Updates

Family First Prevention Services Prevention Action

This act was signed into law approximately two years ago. The goal of this law was to be able to move children who were in foster care out of residential settings where there were multiple children in a cottage type setting into traditional homes. To clarify, most of it was based on IVE funding. If the child is in a residential program or a cottage style foster care home the fee is

approximately \$4000.00 a month per child. If the child was eligible based on poverty level when entering foster care, the reimbursement is up to 65%. The federal government, through this act, said that the federal reimbursement of 50 to 65% cannot exist outside of two weeks. The push is to make sure children have normalcy in traditional style homes. DSS is working diligently with the state and community partners such as Crossnore Homes to see how this will impact us. Annually, there is a 3-million-dollar budget allocation for foster care payments. In the next budget cycle, it is important to understand that we have spoken with Ms. Robinson via the manager's office to discuss budget increases to this line item because the federal reimbursement to the next budget year could be lost.

Mr. Isler has been in conversations with the President of the Crossnore school regarding how they are working around these parameters. They are working along with the state to obtain a different level of licensure to support the reimbursement of the 50 to 65%.

NCDHHS MOU (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services / Memorandum of Understand)

Mr. Isler shared that dialogue has been taking place over the past two years with the state around MOU regarding an array of performance measures in all services areas. He also shared that lessons have been learned across the state as it relates to performance. The state has been able through advocacy to listen to what is needed.

Beginning January 2021, DSS will enter into this MOU again; the 16 measures will be shared with you.

The Directors Association was able to advocate for 95% face-to-face visits with children in foster care in the midst of this pandemic that could be done virtually.

Regarding federal payments to arrears and collections; the federal baseline has always been around 40 to 50%; however, the state has chosen in this MOU in the past two years to place the baseline at approximately 85%. The state cannot hold a level of accountability that is not consistent with the level the federal government holds us to

LME/MCO (Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations) Partnership Meetings

DSS is working diligently to address issues. Forsyth and Davidson counties were leading champions in a foster care pilot that was funded by Cardinal and the state. The pilot was defunded approximately two weeks ago, due to Medicaid transformation. The state wants to implement Medicaid transformation first; then look at a larger working group across the state to figure out some of the gaps in accessing services for children in foster care.

Ongoing Planning with Cardinal's Senior Leadership Regarding Access to Mental Health Services

Cardinal's performance measures regarding reentry into the emergency room within 30 days with a chief complaint in mental health is extremely high when compared to other LME/MCO (Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations). This information was shared during the previous winter work session with the County Manager's office and Commissioners. Cardinal's denials are extremely high as well which means the citizens are in a circular process, such as, visiting the ER, being discharged without receiving mental health services needed. This impacts children in foster care and adults under guardianship.

The question becomes for the community at large; what is the experience in accessing mental health services? When it comes to mental health in the community, the data shows that there is some concern. DSS is meeting with the State and Cardinal on a monthly basis to work on resolving the issues.

Food Insecurity Partnership with the Downtown Health Plaza

Working diligently with Medicaid transformation

Looking at the whole person care

DSS has partnered with the Downtown Health Plaza to create an e-Pass process so the patients can be screened for food insecurity medically and enroll in Food & Nutrition Service. Updates will follow.

COVID-19 Funding for Families

The child care expenses have increased for all families with children. Families can apply for the Extra Credit Grant for a payment of \$335.00. The information is going out through the FCDSS Call Center.

Committee Updates

Strategic Plan -- Dr. Massler

The board made the decision to move forward with developing a strategic plan and goals. Mr. Seats put a committee together who was assigned the task of creating a strategic plan to bring back to the board. Committee members were Dr. Massler, Ms. Parker, Mr. Blalock, and Mr. El Amin. Ms. Robinson, Mr. Seats, Mr. Isler, and Mr. Swift attended some of the meetings to give input.

The strategic plan is broken down into four parts: Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities/Goals. The Vision statement was presented to the board by Dr. Massler. He felt that the entire board should make the final decision on the vision statement.

Dr. Edwards recommended replacing “self-sufficiency for all” with “full potential” in the HHS Board Mission Statement because “self-sufficiency” is not realistic. Ms. Corbet agreed.

Mr. Seats reminded everyone that the discussion around a vision statement is to set goals (which is where we want to be) while recognizing not everyone is going to achieve them. He stated that there has to be measurable goals; for example, self-sufficiency is more measurable than potential. Potential is subject to change. He is in favor of keeping self-sufficiency in the statement.

Dr. Edwards shared that it is not lowering standards; however, by setting the bar for self-sufficiency, you are red lining huge populations of people that may never obtain it and ignoring the reality. He also agreed that reaching full potential may be harder to measure but it is more realistic.

Dr. Petrou shared that she would prefer to have a large/broad goal while knowing that everyone is not going to reach it. She also said that we should acknowledge it and work with people where they are without lowering the goals. Dr. Petrou asked, what does “to create a community in which life is convenient and pleasant” mean? Ms. Robinson responded that it could mean walkable and bikeable communities, age friendly community events etc. Dr. Massler responded

that it could be eliminating food deserts so people can get to stores without having to ride a bus for two hours and have access to pleasant parks. Ms. Robinson also added that the priorities/goals come straight from the Forsyth County's overall mission statement.

Dr. Robie shared that the committee has done a great job. He stated that the original government document is everything that our country is built on is the Declaration of Independence. He feels that the second statement embraces that concept better than the first one, which he is in favor of.

Ms. Whisenhunt shared that when Dudley Watts came to the first meeting, he stated that one of the goals is to make people self-sufficient. She also said she thinks it is a worthy and positive goal and she wants people in Forsyth County to be positive about their life and what they can accomplish. Everyone may not be self-sufficient. One of the reasons the Commissioners voted to consolidate the boards is they felt that the services would reach more people and help them become more self-sufficient. The goal is for people in Forsyth County to be self-sufficient and for us to deliver services to them that could help them.

Dr. Massler made a motion to accept vision statement one as submitted. (*1. Self-sufficient individuals living in a safe, healthy, and educated community.*) Ms. Parker seconded the motion. Mr. Seats asked if there was any discussion. The motion carried with 12 votes in favor to 3 not in favor. Item one will be incorporated into the official document.

Dr. Massler made a motion to accept the document with vision statement one as presented without including a change in the mission; self-sufficiency will remain in the mission statement. Mr. El Amin seconded the motion. The motion carried with 15 votes in favor. The document is adopted by the board as is.

Dr. Massler, Mr. Seats, and Dr. Petrou thanked the committee for their work on the mission and vision statements.

Legislature -- Dr. Linda Petrou

Everyone is out of session campaigning. Everything will be on hold until the first of the new year when the new General Assembly is sworn in.

New Business

Policy on Policies -- Mr. Joshua Swift

It is a part of Public Health's accreditation on agency functions and essential services. It provides guidance and direction policy and procedures for the department. It governs the operations as well as management in making programs, development and implementation.

There is an annual internal review process by the assistant health directors. Mr. Swift reviews the edits afterwards to approve or disapprove. There is a process to distribute the policies by Ms. Lorrie Christie. Policies are archived and stored.

Mr. Seats asked if there were any changes since last year that the board needs to be aware of? Mr. Swift responded there was nothing significant; however, it outlines the internal review process with senior leadership.

Dr. Massler made a motion to accept the Policies on Policies with changing the name from Consolidated Health and Human Services to Health and Human Services and Mr. El Amin seconded the motion. The motion carried with 15 votes in favor.

Old Business

None

Adjournment

Mr. Seats asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Petrou made motion to adjourn and Mr. El Amin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

SR/tmd

Next Meeting: November 4, 2020-5:30 p.m.