

# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD



## Board Members

Mr. John Blalock  
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.  
Ms. Sharon D. Pettiford, RN  
Ms. Sharon A. Rimm, LCSW  
Dr. Peter Robie, MD  
Mr. J. Phil Seats, R.Ph., MBA  
Dr. Ricky Sides, DC  
Ms. Claudette Weston  
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt, County Commissioner

### Chair

Ms. Heather Parker

### Vice Chair

Mr. Fleming El-Amin

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

### MINUTES

April 5, 2023

### MEMBERS PRESENT – IN-PERSON

Ms. Heather Parker, Chair  
Mr. Fleming El-Amin, Vice Chair  
Mr. John Blalock  
Mr. John Davenport  
Dr. James Doub  
Dr. Brooke Griffith  
Dr. Calvert Jeffers  
Dr. Linda Petrou  
Ms. Sharon Rimm  
Mr. J. Phil Seats  
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

### STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Shontell Robinson  
Ms. Christine Dowdell  
Ms. Denise Price  
Mr. Joshua Swift  
Ms. Lorrie Christie  
Ms. Tanya Donnell  
Ms. Marissa Adams  
Mr. Adam Pendlebury  
Ms. Christa Smith  
Ms. Marie Stephens  
Ms. Jennifer Tubbs

### MEMBERS PRESENT – VIRTUAL

Dr. Palmer Edwards  
Dr. Ricky Sides

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Charles Massler  
Ms. Sharon Pettiford  
Dr. Peter Robie  
Ms. Claudette Weston

### **Call to Order:**

On Wednesday, April 5, 2023, 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 the February 1, 2023, HHS Board was reviewed. Mr. Fleming El-Amin made a motion to approve and Dr. Linda Petrou and Dr. Calvert Jeffers seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment Period:** No comments.

**Board Member Term Limits:** Ms. Parker went over the updated member contact list included in the packets, to review the Board member terms – it was not taken into consideration when the boards consolidated – some drew numbers for short terms that were not a full term. A member may have two full four year terms. The list was done to show the accurate terms – another version will be coming out to show the ends of the terms.

**Deputy County Manager's Comments:** Ms. Shontell Robinson gave the following updates (see handouts on file in the Administrative Binder):

**Statewide Foster Care Plan Update:** Passed the Senate but still needs to be reviewed and approved by the House.

**Cure Violence Program Update** – Ms. Robinson reported that the health department is doing great work on this. The organization that is implementing it is Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods and they already have a program manager and supervisor in place. According to Ms. Robinson, they are in the process of trying to find the final two violence interrupters. She stated it has been a long process and will probably be sometime in May when it hits the ground in the community. There is still training that has to be done with the cure violence global staff, out of Chicago.

**Forsyth Tech Event Update** – Ms. Robinson provided an update regarding the Forsyth Tech incident. She stated that, we do not condone what happened with the lap dancing; however we serve and participate in many events that serve the LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual) community, along with many others. Ms. Robinson stated that staff will be more cognizant about the activities at the events we are attending in the future. The organizers should also be more cognizant about what types of activities are taking place at their events. Ms. Robinson added that staff will be better equipped to ask better questions in the future. Mr. John Davenport is a Forsyth Tech board member and spoke about the event and agreed the lap dance was inappropriate and he would not expect for that to happen again. Mr. Davenport stated they take pride in diversity. He added, they are looking into how they will handle these types of events in the future.

**Department of Social Services (DSS) Director's Comments:** Ms. Christine Dowdell gave the following updates (see handouts on file in the Administrative Binder):

- *March - Social Work Month:* Ms. Dowdell stated that March was Social Work Month and the National Association of Social Workers theme for this year was Social Work Break Barriers. Events were held at the agency for the social worker staff throughout the month.
- *ERAP Wrap-Up Event:* Ms. Dowdell reported they held an event at Tanglewood Park to thank staff who participated in the program, which closed on March 31, 2023. The department provided over \$45 million federal dollars in assistance to avoid evictions to Forsyth County households.
- *Legal Aid:* Ms. Dowdell reported that the Legal Aid is onsite from 9:00-12:00 on Tuesdays to assist with people who receive notices to vacate or late rent notices. Ms. Dowdell stated even though they do not have the ERAP program, there are other services in place that may be able to assist families, like Legal Aid.
- *April – Child Abuse Prevention Month:* Ms. Dowdell reported that DSS collaborated with Ms. Elizabeth Miller from Parenting Path, and they celebrated April as Child Abuse Prevention month. Ms. Dowdell gave everyone in attendance a pinwheel – a symbol for recognizing child abuse.
- *Medicaid Expansion:* Ms. Dowdell reported that Medicaid Expansion was signed into law by Governor Roy Cooper on March 27, 2023 – expected to be implemented by December 2023 but they have not heard anything, yet. Ms. Dowdell stated that Ms. Marissa Adams, who is in attendance, is over Medicaid Expansion if anyone has questions. Ms. Dowdell stated it will require a lot of assistance from the HHS Board for the budgetary requests that are being made. Ms. Dowdell continued on saying she hopes it will be passed because they anticipate a large number of applications from people applying in Forsyth County. She added there has not been any indication that they will receive any startup money even though at their DSS Director’s Association meetings, the state talked about the possibility of helping.

Ms. Sharon Rimm asked about the staff necessary to process all the additional applications. Ms. Adams responded they know there will be a significant number of staff needed. People over 133% of the poverty income will now be eligible which may result in individuals who has never applied before. Ms. Adams stated there will be more foot traffic, not just for DSS but will probably spill over to Public Health. She added once they get over the application hump, they will have to maintain the ongoing cases that are approved for additional services. Ms. Adams said her goal is to hire additional staff and cross-train staff to handle applications intake, in the progression of their rollout, we will also train for ongoing case management. Ms. Dowdell stated we are also aware that all 100 other counties will be advertising and hiring from the same workforce that we will be hiring from, there will be some competitiveness, especially between our sister counties. Ms. Dowdell added they will start as soon as possible – we anticipate to start advertising in June or July so we can become prepared if it does take place in December.

Dr. Brooke Griffith asked do we have plans to push out the information about Medicaid Expansion to people who might qualify now. Ms. Dowdell responded that she asked Ms. Adams to look at some committees so we can deal with it within our agency and identify Medicaid Expansion champions. She added that we have to educate our own staff so that people can

provide the information to the community when they come in. Ms. Adams will be reaching out to Mr. Swift and his team as well as Bridges to Hope and Behavioral Health regarding their services. Ms. Dowdell stated it is a win-win situation for everyone because people who would not normally qualify for it will be eligible for it. The flyers will be in English and Spanish and Mr. Ed McNeal will be doing public service announcements and Mr. Todd Luck will also be helping to get the word out on Facebook. Ms. Dowdell said she is looking forward to this - it is good for NC.

Ms. Rimm asked if DSS was still having the monthly job fairs. Ms. Dowell responded they have been held monthly, beginning in January for Children's Services. Ms. Adams' team conducts interviews every other week in addition to the monthly job fairs from Human Resources. Children's Services and Adult Services also conduct interviews as needed weekly or bi-weekly – we do not just wait for the job fairs. Ms. Dowdell stated we are also trying to enhance our internship program so we can have more people come in, not just for social work positions but also trying to work with Forsyth Tech and other places so maybe they can have some income maintenance staff. Ms. Dowdell added they are trying to get the word out that you do not have to have a degree for every job in DSS – if you have a GED, you can see what positions you are eligible for.

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

**COVID-19 Update as of March 30, 2023**

- Last 14 days – cases decreased 3%
- COVID Hospitalizations - 12 Forsyth County residents
- Last 14 days – 4 deaths

**COVID Future**

- May 11, 2023 – Federal Emergency ending
- March 22, 2023 – State vendor supported testing ending
- March 17, 2023 – 24/7 Covid test kiosk distribution installed
- Summer 2023 – vaccine will be commercialized
- At-home Test Kits – 500-700 distributed at 10 library locations, PH and Government Center Kiosk

Mr. Swift shared the following division updates:

*Internal Health Services:*

- Emergency Preparedness – received 55,000 additional COVID-19 at-home tests from NC DPH – part of the state's effort to empty out their warehouse before the end of the fiscal year
- EPI and Surveillance – completed and submitted the 2021 Forsyth County State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report. Currently working on the 2022 Forsyth County Child Fatality Annual Report and the 2021 WS/FCS High School and Middle School Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS) Results' Summary Reports
- Finance – submitted Public Health's FY24 budget request for review. The FY24 Fee Schedule review is underway.

*Community Health Services:*

- Environmental Health – to help support and strengthen the county-wide Integrated Mosquito Management program, the Vector Control program has requested to receive additional program funding through the CDC.
- WIC – two potential sites (Novant Health and Waughtown Novant OB/GYN practice) have been identified for WIC to extend services to county women, infants, and children.
- School Health – hosting a child and adolescent immunization clinic and the department on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> as part of the Operation Zero Exclusion efforts to reduce fall exclusion rates of WSFCS students.
- Laboratory – updated hematology equipment is in place to begin use.

*Personal Health Services:*

- Community vaccine clinics – temporary and contract staff continue to operate Covid, MPX and flu vaccine clinics inside of Clinic 3 (immunizations) - the numbers fluctuate but are slow most days.
- Clinics – will slowly begin to return back to some walk-in appointments in April. Provide more flexibility and accessibility to the community and increase productivity. The number of patients being seen daily to increase in Family Planning and STI clinics.

*Preventive Health Services:*

- POSSE – participated in 15 outreach events
- April 2023 – new Bethesda Shelter site for the homeless to begin
- STD/HIV tests performed – January = 465; February = 748
- 1,360 protective devices distributed
- Hispanic Liaison – collaborated and hosted an outreach event focusing on recent arrivals from Venezuela and other warm climates (600 individuals and 30 vendors attended)
- Men’s Health – held first Pastor/Minister basketball game – huge success

*Public Health Events:*

- April 1-30, 2023 – collecting donations for Crisis Control Ministries
- April 18, 2023 – honoring administrative professionals
- April 20, 2023 - resolution at Board of Commissioners
- April 26, 2023 – Public Health lunch

*Strategic Planning:*

- Along with staff from UNC Institute for Public Health, Public Health staff participated in strategic planning efforts. Guests included Board Members Mr. El-Amin, Dr. Charles Massler and Commissioner Gloria Whisenhunt.

**Behavioral Health Director’s Comments:** Ms. Denise Price reported the following (see complete/detailed handouts on file in the Administrative Binder):

- *Health Educator:* Ms. Price introduced Ms. Annie Vasquez as the new Health Educator for Behavioral Health.
- Announced there were five Stepping Up graduates
- Upcoming Events: May – Suicide Community Conversation; June – Reentry Simulation and Resource Café

*Project Updates:*

- Highland Avenue Center – the design stage is nearing completion; pricing is

pending; revisions to the lease to ensure services will continue during construction are being processed.

- Security is being added at the Behavioral Health Urgent Care.
- Reserve funds are being used for transportation to appointments that are medically necessary and for security.
- A pilot between primary care and Daymark for MAT is being explored.
- DSS Group Home – an architect is looking to identify what is needed to bring the building up to current code.

**Behavioral Health Budget Request Overview FY2024 – Ms. Price went over the Behavioral Health budget overview (complete/detailed handout in Administrative Binder):**

- ARPA Funds - \$2.362 million for the Highland Avenue Center and auditorium – Annex 1
- State Funds - \$12.5 million – crisis services at Highland Avenue Center (dollars to be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026)
- Behavioral Health/MOE Funds - \$4.026 million for mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disability services each year
- Opioid Settlement Funds - \$1.2 million per year for 18 years to address opioid crisis, anticipated

**Behavioral Health Funding Recommendations:**

- Provision of mental health, substance use, and developmental disability services – continuation of several County-managed direct service provision initiatives - \$4,026,677 (total funding)
- Public application process to award \$1,939,994 of the \$4,026,677 – received 31 applications for consideration. Balance carved out for county and multi-year pilot programs to be included in 2024 continuation budget
- Applications were reviewed by HHS subcommittee members
- ASL for an Office Specialist to support Behavioral Health Services work

**Opioid Settlement Funding Recommendations:**

- Settlement dollars received - \$2,561,945 – direct provision of settlement-allowed and prioritized strategies to mitigate impact of opioid epidemic
- Launched a public application process in February 2023 – to award up to \$2,510,647 – received 19 applications for consideration, recommended projects totaling \$1,870,021, including a carve out of \$51,299

**Significant Budget Changes:**

- Transition of pharmacy and substance use health educator to Behavioral Health budget
- Request for one additional office specialist position
- First recommendations for allocation of opioid settlement funding

Dr. Petrou made a recommendation to approve the Behavioral Health budget, seconded by Dr. Griffith. The budget was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Social Services Budget Request Overview FY2024 - Ms. Dowdell and Ms. Christa Smith went over the DSS budget overview (complete/detailed handout in Administrative Binder):**

**DSS Budget without Alternative Service Level Requests:**

- Salaries/benefits/other compensation = \$35,576,680;
- operating (includes Foster Care Payments) = 15,485,188;
- Total expenditures = \$51,061,868;
- Total Revenues = 27,933,148;
- County Dollars = \$23,128,720

**DSS Budget with Alternative Services Level Requests:**

- Salaries/benefits/other compensation = \$37,593,165;
- Operating (includes Foster Care Payments) = \$16,366,138;
- Total expenditures = \$53,959,303;
- Total Revenues = 29,882,929;
- County Dollars = \$24,076,374

**Alternative Service Level (ASL) Requests:**

- Medicaid Expansion (projected increases in applications, foot traffic, calls, mail, and documentation for the projection numbers);
- Staff (CPS SW Program Manager, Adoption Assistance SW, CPS After Hours Sr. SW);
- Non-Staff (FOCUS Replacement, Intercom Paging System, Aging Symposium, Playground)

Mr. El-Amin made a recommendation to approve the Department of Social Services (DSS) budget, seconded by Mr. John Blalock. The budget was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Public Health Budget Request Overview FY2024 – Mr. Adam Pendlebury went over the Public Health budget overview (complete/detailed handout in Administrative Binder):**

**Budget Drivers:**

- Pass-through funding for COVID-19 is beginning to sunset
- Pharmacy, Stepping Up and FROST programs have moved to Behavioral Health
- Neighborhood Equity Atlas - Spatial Justice Center contract enters the third year at \$75,000
- Advancing Equity ends (\$67,980) – AA466
- Family Planning Services and Reducing Infant Mortality Coalition funding have moved from Agreement Addenda funding to Grant funding
- Alternate Service Level request for three Environmental Health Specialists

**COVID Funding:**

- (AA543) 2,040,200 – portion will fund vaccine purchases for FY24
- (AA716) 1,074,828 – vaccination-related infrastructure funds
- (AA546) 825,762 – temporary staffing for COVID-19 response

Mr. J. Phil Seats made a recommendation to approve the Department of Public Health (PH) budget, seconded by Mr. Blalock. The budget was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Public Health Fee Schedule:** Mr. Pendlebury presented the FY2023-2024 fee schedule to the Board for their approval.

Mr. Seats made a recommendation to approve the Department of Public Health (PH) fee schedule, seconded by Mr. El-Amin. The fee schedule was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Educational Opportunity – Child Support Services** – Ms. Jennifer Tubbs, introduced herself as the Social Services Division Director. Ms. Tubbs started by stating that Child Support Services seeks to strengthen families by securing paternity, financial and medical support while advocating for healthy bonds between parents and their children.

- currently have a caseload of around 13,000
- collections – annually \$23 million
- incentive measures (paternity establishment – 99%; cases under order – 89%; current support collections – 64.71%; payment in arrears – 69.60%) – any incentive areas scoring over 80% are pulling down the maximum amount for incentive award payments to be reinvested into the program
- administrative enforcement – 98.5% (wage withholding, tax intercept, financial account liens, passport denial, lottery intercept)
- judicial enforcement – 1.5% (motion and order to show cause)
- available ways to pay through State child support (paypal; venmo; apple pay; google pay; walmart)

### **Committee Updates**

**FROST Committee:** Mr. Blalock, on behalf of committee members Ms. Claudette Weston and Ms. Rimm reported the following:

- The committee is very excited about Ms. Annie Vasquez joining as Substance Use Educator and leader of FROST.
- The committee participated on the recent Opioid settlement requests for funding. The process was very well done and dialogue among the panel was excellent. We are very excited about the impact this will have on our community.
- The next FROST meeting will be on April 19, 2023 from 12:30-2:30pm, (virtual).

**Legislative:** Dr. Petrou reported that Medicaid Expansion was signed into law by Governor Cooper on March 27, 2023 and expected to be implemented by December 2023, contingent on the passage of a state budget.

### **HHS Board Member Shadowing – Moment of Reflection:**

Dr. Edwards reported the following on the recent shadowing experiences he had at Family and Children's Court, Mental Health Court and meeting with senior staff to learn about the County's Medicaid program. Dr. Edwards stated that he enjoyed learning about all of these as it broadened his understanding of these helpful programs, and he was impressed by the knowledge and dedication of the staff. Dr. Edwards suggested that other Board members try shadowing, themselves, to learn "first hand" about all the County is doing.

**Adjourn:**



Ms. Parker asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Petrou made a motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

SR/lgc

**Next Meeting: June 7, 2023 - 5:30pm**