

Rutherford County



Meeting Minutes - Draft - Outline

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

4:00 PM

389 Fairground Road, Spindale, NC 28160

Social Services Board

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Board Members in Attendance were: Chairperson Barbara Thompson, Member David Herndon, Member Joseph Maimone, Member Georgia Steele. Absent was Vice Chairperson Bryan King.

II. Discussion and Adoption of Agenda

A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Member Herndon and seconded by Member Steele, all were in favor.

III. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes was made by Member Steele and seconded by Member Herndon, all were in favor.

IV. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments

V. Personnel Report

Mr. Carroll presented the Personnel Report by asking Mrs. Bridges to introduce the newest employee in Economic Services. She introduced Ms. Angela Melton who began in Family & Children's Medicaid as a caseworker on September 22. Mr. Carroll mentioned there is also a new part time employee in Economic Services who recently retired from the Agency, Ms. Joan Harris. Mr. Carroll introduced the Employee of the Quarterly for the fourth quarter of 2020, Ms. Carla Beeler, who works as a caseworker in Long Term Care Medicaid. He stated that there are currently two vacancies: a Processing Assistant IV; currently filled by a temporary worker as the Agency waits to see the effect that Medicaid Transformation (Managed Care) has on Medicaid Transportation. He reported that Managed Care is scheduled to begin in July 2021. There will be a lot of work between now and then because many things have to be completed again, including updated materials and recipients having to re-enroll. He reminded the Board Members that Mrs. Bridges provided an update last month and we will continue to do that between now and July. The second vacancy is a Social Worker I/A&T, which is due to a recent resignation.

As of October 8, there was an increase in total comp time of 10% from August. There was a slight increase in CPS, but a decrease in combined Children's Services. This is likely due to a slight increase in the number of reports. These have increased some, but not to the pre-COVID level. There was a significant increase in Economic Services, primarily in Medicaid, this is due to many of the program modifications ending and the resulting additional work.

[ID 20-2627](#)

Personnel Report as of 10/18/2020

Attachments:

[Personnel Report as of 10-18-2020](#)

VI. Budget Discussion

Mrs. Price reviewed the budget information as presented in the Agenda packet.

[ID 20-2628](#) **Budget Discussion**

Attachments: [Budget Discussion - 10-2020](#)

[ID 20-2629](#) **Financial Report - September 2020**

Attachments: [Financial Report - September 2020](#)

VII. Report of Services

Mr. Carroll presented the Service Report for September. He noted no significant changes from the August report, although a few items may look unusual due to COVID-19. CPS reports are up slightly since school started, but not where they were last year. The FNS allotment is higher than it would normally be because full household size allotments continued for September. Medicaid Transportation has started to increase since in-person medical appointments are picking up. The decrease began in mid-March and for April, May, and June, there was a significant decrease. In July, it began to pick up, but certainly not to the point that it was prior to March.

[ID 20-2630](#) **Report of Services - September 2020**

Attachments: [Report of Services - September 2020](#)

VIII. Board Member Compensation

Mrs. Thompson stated it has been mentioned that the Board Member pay has not changed in several years stating that Board Members take off from work, use gas to get to the meetings, etc. Mr. Carroll stated that the County Commissioners would need to approve any changes. Mr. Herndon stated we need to have the County Commissioners review the rate. Mr. Carroll stated we would draft a statement for Mrs. Thompson's signature.

[ID 20-2631](#) **Board Member Compensation**

Attachments: [Board Member Compensation.xlsx](#)

IX. 2021-22 NCDHHS-County MOU

Mr. Carroll discussed the updated Memorandum Of Understanding with DHHS. In 2017, a law was passed that requires Counties to enter into an annual written agreement with NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), which includes performance measures for all mandated services, with the exception of Medicaid. After the COVID-19 Pandemic began, NCDHHS decided not to issue formal corrective actions relating to the performance measures on the 2019-20 MOU. He noted that the Agency would not have had any corrective action. NCDHHS also decided not to issue a new MOU in July for 2020-2021, but to continue the current agreement through December 31 with a new MOU to begin on January 1. The MOU is due back to the State on December 31. It will continue for 18 months to get us back on track with the fiscal year and will run through June 30, 2022. NCDHHS worked with the Director's Association and the Joint State/County Committee and made some revisions to the new plan. These changes were related to some of the performance measures, and there are no changes in the terms of the agreement. The Agenda packet included two documents titled: Performance Measures at a Glance; one for Child Welfare and the other for all other services.

Mr. Carroll discussed the changes in the performance measures. The new MOU will include changes to the four measures for Adult Services and an additional performance measure for Child Welfare. Adult Services measures are 85% of APS evaluations relating to abuse or neglect be completed within 30 days; 85% of Evaluations relating to exploitation be completed within 45 days. Prior to this year, these were set at 95%. Rutherford County has never had a month that it was less than 100%. Special Assistance (SA) is also included with Adult Services measures. 85% of SA applications will be completed within 45 days. There are two areas relating to SA, SA for the Aged and SA for the Disabled. These measures have been in the MOU, but we have not been subject to corrective action if they were not met prior to this year because there were no reliable reports for these, but we are now able to get these reports. The additional Child Welfare measure is all children in foster care will have a face-to-face visit with the SW each month.

Two measures were deleted that related to Program Integrity because they are measured in the Management Evaluation review of each County. The cost effectiveness in Child Support measure was removed because it is not a federal measure. The other Child Support measures have been changed to reflect the minimum federal performance, which the State is required to meet. The expectation on those measures is lower than in the current agreement. In past years, even before there was an MOU, the goal was based on the County's performance the prior year. This was much higher than what the expectation is for this agreement. We will still expect the same level of performance, but with the lowered goals in the MOU, we will not have corrective action for failing to meet them and still meet the federal requirements. The other performance measures remain the same for Economic Services, which includes FNS, Medicaid, Work First, and the Energy Programs. There is a total of 16 performance measures, last year there were 17. We are able to run reports each month to monitor these goals, and we have not had issue in meeting our goal and complying with the agreement.

[ID 20-2632](#)

2021-22 NCDHHS-COUNTY MOU

Attachments:

[2021-22 NCDHHS-County MOU](#)

[ID 20-2633](#) **2021-22 NCDHHS-County MOU Attachment 1**

Attachments: [2021-22 NCDHHS-County MOU Attachment 1](#)

[ID 20-2634](#) **2021-22 NCDHHS-County MOU Attachment 2**

Attachments: [2021-22 NCDHHS-County MOU Attachment 2](#)

X. COVID-19 Procedures-Practices Update 10-2020

Mr. Carroll provided an update on the Agency's COVID-19 Risk Procedures and Practices. He stated that once the State moved into Phase 3, the Agency stopped checking temperatures and requiring employees to be tested after returning from vacation. During the time that employee temperatures were checked, there was only one employee that had to go home due to their temperature being too high, and it was not related to COVID. There was no incident when an employee tested positive as a result of being on vacation. The Agency continues to check temperatures of all visitors and ask the COVID screening questions and follow protocol based on those answers. Employees wear masks at all times, except when alone in personal offices. Visitors are required to wear masks. Protective measures also continue when working with others and when using the County vehicles. DSS has developed procedures for requiring testing and does tracing within the office when someone is exposed to someone that is positive or positive themselves. This is based on guidance from the Health Department. A spreadsheet is maintained on all exposures and testing within the Agency. 35% of staff continue to telework two days per week.

COVID-19 statistics for September:

Number of tests: 41

Number of positive tests: 1

Number of negative tests: 40

Number waiting results: 0

Number of people tested because of vacation: 25

Number of people tested due to symptoms: 6

Number of people exposed directly or indirectly: 10 (6 exposed at work; 4 exposed elsewhere)

[ID 20-2635](#) **COVID-19 Procedures-Practices Update 10-2020**

Attachments: [COVID-19 Procedures-Practices](#)

XI. Program Updates:

1. Social Work

COVID-19 Funding for APS/CPS

Mr. Sparrow updated the Board on some of the items that can be purchased with the State issued Corona Virus Aid Relief Economic and Security (CARES) funding of \$103,000. This will include upgrading some equipment, purchasing scanners for individual offices to help reduce groups from congregating at the scanning stations and adding efficiency, upgrade iPads which was already in the budget this year, and purchasing new iPads for the Program Administrator and Supervisors. We are waiting for clarification on the prepayment of the SpeakWrite program.

Benchmarks' Standardized Assssment

Mr. Sparrow discussed the Benchmarks Standardized Assessment in which we participated in the evidence based voluntary practice trauma screening for children coming into care. If we can identify trauma, we could possibly reduce the stay in foster care. Training is set up to roll out in January 2021 with not much additional work on our part. Partners will recruit providers to handle trauma based therapy. He also stated there has been some restructuring internally among the social worker units to align In Home Services teams being grouped together instead of mixing them in Units with the Investigators. All are excited and are looking forward to the outcome of this new structure. Hopefully this will add to a higher morale.

2. Economic Services

Pandemic EBT Benefits

Mrs. Bridges stated Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfers (PEBT) were approved by USDA for children whose access to free and reduced meals at school has been impacted by remote learning this Fall. Most children in Rutherford County qualified for this program as Rutherford County Schools has been approved for all of their students to receive free or reduced meals. Parents were approved to receive \$58.60 per child for the period of August and September at a daily rate of \$5.86 per child. These benefits were loaded on cards after 9/30/2020. We have researched 124 letters returned by the Post Office to the Agency and these have been re-mailed and have 60 more to work on. This has really increased the call volume for the FNS workers who are already very busy due to the increase in FNS households.

REDA Audit Update

Mrs. Bridges updated the Board on the Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA) stating the State's expectation for Counties is to have 96.8% accuracy rate for active cases and 96.8% accuracy rate for negative cases. The internal control rate should be at 90%. 80 cases have been pulled so far, January through April of this year. We currently are at 100% for our active and negative cases through March. She stated we did have an eligibility error in April which will alter our percentage moving forward. Our internal control accuracy rate is 98.3%. We have only had one internal control error cited. The Quality Control Analyst commented on our records and stated she was even looking more closely because we are doing such a good job. She asked that we share our best practices and how our County is set up in order to make suggestions to other Counties.

3. Director's Report

None

Staff Kudos

None

XII. Closed Session

No Closed Session

XIII. Announcements

No Announcements

XIV. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn made by Member Maimone and seconded by Member Steele, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned.