

# Rutherford County



## Meeting Minutes - Draft - Outline

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

4:00 PM

389 Fairground Road, Spindale, NC 28160

## Social Services Board

## I. Welcome and Call to Order

*Chairperson Thompson, Vice Chairperson King, Member Steele, and Member Maimone were in attendance. Member Herndon was absent.*

## II. Discussion and Adoption of Agenda

**A motion was made by Member Maimone and seconded by Member Steele that the Agenda be approved. The motion was approved by all attending.**

## III. Adoption of Minutes

**A motion was made by Vice Chairperson King and seconded by Member Steele that the Minutes be approved. The motion was approved by all attending.**

## IV. Public Comments

*No Public Comments*

## V. Personnel Report

*Mr. Carroll presented the Personnel Report stating since the last Board Meeting there has been one new hire (Children's Services); one resignation (Economic Services); and no terminations. The current vacancies are: IMC III, Result of resignation; IMC I, Result of a promotion to IMC II; Processing Assistant IV (Medicaid Transportation), formerly filled with a temporary worker; Processing Assistant III (Legal Department); Child Support Agent II - Result of a retirement - completed interviews and in the process of making a selection.*

*Mr. Carroll stated as of June 27, there was a decrease in total comp time of 11% from May. There was an increase in CPS, but overall a 3% decrease in Children's Services. There was a 28% decrease in Economic Services since May. As temporary COVID policies are lifted, there will probably be an increase in our Medicaid and FNS. There is a little concern that when we shift back to pre-COVID policies, it may create a lot of additional work, but we are not sure of this yet.*

[ID 21-2903](#)

### **Personnel Report - June 2021**

**Attachments:**

[Personnel Report - June 2021](#)

## VI. Budget Discussion

*Mrs. Price reviewed the budget items as presented in the Agenda packet.*

*Member Maimone questioned if it is thought that the under budget items will go back to normal. Mrs. Price stated we do not get funds up front, so there is no money left over, no money received that is laying around to be spent.*

*There were no other questions.*

[ID 21-2904](#) **Budget Discussion - July 2021**

Attachments: [Budget Discussion - July, 2021](#)

[ID 21-2905](#) **Financial Report - June 2021**

Attachments: [Financial Report - June 2021](#)

**VII. Service Report**

*Mr. Carroll presented the Service Report noting no major changes. He stated that the Food and Nutrition Services allotment is still high because of the full household allotment supplements and also due to an increase due to the \$95 minimum supplement that was effective in April. The State is going back and giving the \$95 minimum for prior months, so those that received a supplement of less than \$95 will receive the difference for prior months. There was another reduction in Work First Employment cases again for June. They decreased from 24 in April to 14 in May and for June, it reduced to 7. This is due to temporary policy being lifted, and if participants do not complete the Job Search and other requirements of the program, they can be terminated. This was not allowed under temporary COVID policy. Those that did not complete the requirements will be sanctioned for one month and can reapply.*

[ID 21-2911](#) **Service Report - June 2021**

Attachments: [Service Report - June 2021](#)

**IX. Program Updates:****1. Social Work**

## Adult Services Program Compliance Monitoring

*Mr. Sparrow shared that Rutherford County Department of Social Services went through an annual Program Compliance Monitoring for Adult Protective Services on June 8, 2021, stating they met with two of the Program Monitors on July 7 for the findings meeting.*

*The Program Compliance process reviews types of funds used, respective to the service. A total of 50 random cases were reviewed over four program areas. The reviewers documented strengths and weaknesses based on the scoring percentages on the monitoring tools and they report back to us with recommendations for improvement, any disallowed costs and any required corrective action we need to take to improve compliance. We have to draft a corrective action plan to address issues raised in the review.*

*Overall the findings were positive. The Adult Protective Services Unit was in compliance with funding guidelines for SSBG, Special Assistance In-Home, Medicaid Administrative Claiming, and all Daysheets matched documentation. Therefore, there were no disallowed costs in any of the funding sources.*

*There were recommended corrective actions, which the Agency must submit plans in response of the findings. All corrective actions were similar and address qualitative issues with documentation of protective services cases. The narratives in each record, regardless of type of service should document evidence to support the worker's decision in each case. Generally, the reviewers said it was clear why a worker made a decision and those decisions were in compliance with program rules/policy, but felt the record could have been richer in its description of what the social worker found from adults in need of protection and from collateral sources. Corrective action is required in only one of four program areas. The corrective action plan will consist of training and monitoring of records to see if training was effective.*

## [ID 21-2912](#)

### **Family Reunification Services Policy Changes and Monitoring Update**

**Attachments:**

[Family Reunification Services Policy Changes and Monitoring Update](#)

*Rutherford County Department of Social Services is awarded an allotment of funds each year for services that would address the initial safety concerns that led to children coming into DSS custody. This year, for the first time, we were required to submit a report to the States on how those funds were used, and we must submit a plan for the next fiscal year for the use of those funds. Secondly, the State revised the policy allowing us to continue to use the available funds for up to 15 months after a child/children is returned home. Prior to the revision, funds could only be used to support the parents/family 15 months prior to the child returning home. The children must still be in our custody for these funds to be used. The reality is when a child starts a Trial Home Placement, custody is returned to the parents with 3 to 6 months.*

*As part of FY 21/22 Family Reunification Services Plan, we will be proposing to start a new peer led 'support group' for parents involved in our system. We have identified a parent who has lost custody of his children three times, but was successfully reunified with his children and during this process he completed training to become a Certified Peer Specialist. We are in the design phase of the program now, but may start the service by early September. This service will be reimbursable through family reunification funds and will be staffed by a contracted worker.*

## LINKS Retreat

*Mr. Sparrow commented on our young adults in LINKS stating they are one of the strongest groups in the State, the State recognizes them and their accomplishments, they are a great group of young adults.*

## 2. Economic Services

*Mrs. Bridges explained that Special Assistance (SA) is a smaller program within the Adult Medicaid Unit that provides cash assistance to assist with room and board in a rest home living arrangement. If the beneficiary lives at home, the cash assistance payment can assist to help pay monthly expenses. She stated there are a little over 200 cases, but they are very strict on their policies and procedures. SA is a program to assist beneficiaries whose level of care is still somewhat independent and not quite to the point of needing Long Term Care and constant medical attention. She stated 20 cases were pulled and the monitor was very complimentary of the documentation and how neat the records were, but a lot of the cases were cited for incorrect base periods. The workers carry Medicaid cases, as well as, SA cases. With the push in Medicaid to be two months ahead on all re-certifications, they inadvertently included SA cases. There are no obvious overpayments, but they are having to rework the cases that they reviewed early and they will be checked again for accuracy. This is a drawback of doing multiple programs. The workers and the supervisors get confused. There were some other findings such as not completing their review booklets in its entirety, but most errors stem from the incorrect base period.*

*Mrs. Bridges addressed the letter in the Agenda referencing Public Charge. Public Charge is a term in immigration law to determine whether a person is likely to become dependent on the government for support and is used as one of the several factors to determine certain legal resident statuses. In the previous laws, receipt of several different types of public assistance programs were considered dependent on the government for support and were looked at negatively toward granting citizenship. As of March 2021, the only public assistance program that we administer that would reflect negatively is TANF Cash Assistance program, SSI (through the Social Security Office), and Long Term Care Medicaid.*

## Special Assistance Monitoring

[ID 21-2913](#)      **Public Charge Changes**

Attachments:      [Public Charge Changes](#)

### Medicaid/Long Term Care Transfers

*Mrs. Bridges stated that she and Mr. Carroll wanted to make the Board aware that the Agency is currently experiencing a large amount of program transfers. They currently have 50 program transfers that need to be evaluated which policy states changes are to be completed within 30 days, but this has proven to be impossible for us and other Counties as well. Each program transfer averages 1-2 hours to evaluate, look through all Medicaid records to establish a look back period, and pend for information. Some take more time, some less. On average, these cases take 3-5 hours each. Contributing to the untimeliness is the increase due to the nursing homes opening back up with the decline of Covid and staff turnover. These positions have to know all Adult Medicaid to be able to properly evaluate beneficiaries. The training is extensive. Even though an IMC II usually is promoted to these positions, there is so much to learn. We have really experienced a turnover in this Unit including a change in supervision. We have averaged losing 3 workers each year for the last three years and we have lost 4 so far this year. One of these resignations each year includes a Long Term Care worker.*

### COVID Payment for Work First Recipients

*Mrs. Bridges stated per the Dear County Director Letter you received in the Agenda packet, Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) beneficiaries received a one-time Cash Assistance payment for children included in the WFFA case. This was a little over \$26,000 for Rutherford and assisted 108 families. It appears recipients received \$160 per child. She believes last year's one-time payment was an average of \$265 per child.*

*She also stated we received notification this week that the Public Health Emergency (PHE) has been extended through the middle of October. All programs will continue to operate under current COVID Policy until the PHE is lifted.*

## 3. Director's Report

*Mr. Carroll presented the legislative updates referencing the bill tracker contained in the Agenda packet. The tracker only includes bills that have made crossover. He noted the bills that have had movement since last month: S87 - moved on to the House Rules Committee on 6/22. This bill allows Charter Schools approved as Public Schools to receive Medicaid reimbursement for services on an IEP that are covered by Medicaid; H205 - the language in this bill around putting abuse/neglect resources in public schools has been added to S693. S693 is Expedite Child Safety and Permanency. There was a favorable committee substitute, which added the abuse/neglect language on 6/29 and is now in the House Rules Committee. There are some concerns about the abuse/neglect and schools issue and the CPS Hotline, but the biggest concern is if they allow access to information in a CPS record to members of the General Assembly and although it reads that only minimum information is necessary to satisfy the request, it is still concerning. H473 - This is the Revised Safe Surrender Laws. Some language was added that DSS can apply exparte for custody, this is an improvement because the concern was that the original version stated that DSS had custody just by virtue of the safe surrender. The current law states that we file a petition as soon as we receive the child, so this change basically is the same thing. There were no other concerns with this bill.*

[ID 21-2914](#) **Legislative Updates - July 14, 2021**

**Attachments:** [Legislative Updates - July 14, 2021](#)

## **X. Closed Session**

*No Closed Session.*

## **XI. Announcements**

*There were no Announcements.*

## **XII. Adjourn**

*Meeting adjourned at 4:54pm.*