

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
November 27, 2023 6:30 p.m.**

- I. CALL TO ORDER/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:** The regular monthly meeting of the Brunswick County Health and Human Services Advisory Board was called to order by Dr. Allen Williams at 6:31 p.m. in the Health Services Board Room (Building A).
- A. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Dr. Williams asked for public comments. There were none.
- B. SPECIAL PRESENTATION:** Dr. Williams asked if there were any special presentations. Mr. Stanley welcomed two new Board members and asked them to introduce themselves. Dr. Lauren Gallagher is a mobile veterinarian practitioner servicing all of Brunswick County. Chip Carroll is a farmer and has been a member of the Brunswick County Farm Bureau Board for 50 years as well as being a member of the Brunswick County Board of Health, prior to consolidation. Mr. Stanley also introduced Lyle Johnston, EMS Deputy Director. The Emergency Medical Services department has been added to the Health & Human Services family. Mr. Stanley was very thankful for the department's support during COVID and is looking forward to working closer with EMS. Mr. Howard announced Travis Greer as Employee of the Quarter for Health Services. Travis is responsible for health promotions, the Community Health Assessment, and communications. He was nominated for his leadership and willingness to help others.
- II. REGULARLY OCCURRING ITEMS:**
- A. ATTENDANCE:**
1. The following members were present:
 - Dr. Allen Williams
 - Mr. Marty Cooke
 - Ms. Cindy Carver
 - Mr. Hubert Reaves
 - Dr. Travis Pickens
 - Dr. Justin Asbury
 - Ms. Lisa Narron
 - Dr. Lauren Gallagher
 - Mr. Chip Carroll
 2. Members absent:
 - Mr. Gene Ward
 3. Staff members present:
 - David Stanley, Deputy County Manager – Health & Human Services
 - Cathy Lytch, Social Services Director
 - Anita Hartsell, Veteran Services Director
 - David Howard, Health Services Director
 - Danny Thornton, Environmental Health Director
 - Lyle Johnston, EMS Deputy Director

Marjorie Rayl, Quality Assurance Specialist
Travis Greer, Public Health Educator

4. Guests present: None

- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the monthly meeting held on **September 25, 2023** were reviewed. Dr. Williams asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none. **Ms. Carver moved to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. Asbury seconded the motion. The vote to approve the minutes as presented was unanimous. (Closed)**

- C. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:** Dr. Williams asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Mr. Stanley noted that Item “B” *Application for Army Surplus Donation Program* under New Business was highlighted as an action item on the Agenda. He asked that this be changed to an information only item with no action taken at this time. **Ms. Carver moved to approve the agenda with the aforementioned change. Mr. Cooke seconded the motion. The vote to approve the agenda was unanimous. (Closed)**

- D. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
 - 1. VETERANS SERVICES:** Ms. Hartsell announced the Veterans Experience Action Center event back in October was very successful. Not only were North Carolina veterans assisted, but veterans from at least six other states traveled to attend with one as far away as Cuba. Attendance included 559 veterans, with 285 PACT ACT related claims. At least 32 claims were paid out during the event. Retroactive benefits will continue to be generated over the coming days thanks to things set in motion at the event. The VA received 177 disability compensation claims, 109 supplemental claims, as well as pension and survivors’ benefit claims. At this event there were 53 veterans who reached out to seek VA benefits for the first time. **(Info)**

 - 2. CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS:** Mr. Stanley reported the next meeting will be December 12th. **(Info)**

 - 3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** Mr. Thornton reported that, due to new legislation just passed, the NC Building Code removes Environmental Health wastewater staff’s ability to perform existing system checks. These checks have been done in the past in order to verify the system is in the ground and working properly. Mr. Stanley added that staff also verified the same number of bedrooms will be in the new home and that decks, buildings, etc. will not be placed over the system. Residents will now submit an affidavit stating they will abide by the rules and not hold Environmental Health liable. So far, no affidavits have been received. Mr. Thornton stated that 70% of active files were within the 4-week turn-around goal. The oldest files are at eight weeks. Two new staff have been hired and need to be authorized. Staff performed 53 site evaluations, issued 31 improvement permits and 45 construction authorizations, inspected 22 new wells and sampled 16. Food and Lodging staff inspected 193 establishments, made 120 site visits, reviewed 12 plans, and issued 60 permits. **(Info)**

4. **HEALTH SERVICES:** Mr. Howard reported that staffing is almost full with the WIC Registered Dietician position being the only vacancy. This position also provides Medical Nutrition Therapy and lactation consulting. Colleen Potter and Dewayne Varnam, both Environmental Health staff, will be retiring on January 19th. Mr. Howard discussed outside lab services that come with an order from an outside provider. The insurance company pays the lab who processes the sample. Staff is now able to charge \$35 for the service, which is about the cost of staff time, supplies, etc. The public can also go to other private labs for services. **(Info)**
5. **HHS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:** Mr. Howard discussed i2i, a data dashboard program which will compile all clinic data and numbers to look at trends to assist future planning. Starting with clinic services, staff will be able to see the numbers of patients, times of patients (visit time, waiting for interpreter, etc.) and where there is room for improvement. Over 50% of patients need interpreter services. The program pulls data from the electronic medical record and puts it a dashboard based on what is requested. Mr. Howard noted that the vaccine team is already at work to improve the process now that things have slowed down. Mr. Reaves thanked the nurses for educating him on the difference in COVID vaccines. **(Info)**
6. **NC LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Ms. Lytch discussed Session Law 2023-134 which includes provisions directing the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (Kody Kinsley) to reduce the number of LME/MCOs to four or five. Secretary Kinsley issued a directive on Wednesday, November 1st to reduce the number of LME/MCOs from six to four by dissolving Sandhills and consolidating Eastpointe with Trillium to become one. The consolidation plans between Eastpointe and Trillium must be developed and submitted within 30 days. **(Info)**
7. **PUBLIC HOUSING SERVICES:** Ms. Lytch reported that Public Housing is in the process of updating software to include a waiting list module. This will allow individuals to apply for the waiting list, eliminating long lines and weeks of data entry providing a better experience for applicants and staff. The software will allow a random selection when the list is opened. **(Info)**
8. **SOCIAL SERVICES:** Ms. Lytch explained the Infant Safe Surrender Law changes that went into effect on October 1st. In the past a parent could surrender an infant that was seven days old or younger to an individual and DSS would open a case. The new law allows an infant 30 days or younger to be surrendered to a healthcare provider on duty at a hospital, fire department, health department, or a DSS worker. DSS will not open a case but will contact law enforcement and the other parent and, within 60 days, file for custody. This is the first change in the North Carolina law since originally established in 2001. Ms. Lytch reported child welfare cases continue to increase. In October the department accepted 151 reports with the highest previous month was 117. Staff continues to monitor the situation and look at different options to provide support to staff. Staff has a 30-45 day period to make a decision on these reports. Staff is working diligently to meet timelines. **(Info)**

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **VACANT HHS ADVISORY BOARD POSITIONS:** Mr. Stanley noted the Engineer Board position is not yet filled. **(Open)**
- B. **MEDICAID EXPANSION UPDATE:** Ms. Lytch discussed the December 1st launch date of Medicaid Expansion, which will provide approximately 6,000 Brunswick County residents with healthcare. Of the 6,000, approximately 4,000 individuals are currently receiving family planning benefits and will automatically be enrolled in full healthcare coverage on December 1st. To date, 3,545 individuals who had family planning have been automatically switched over to full Medicaid under the expansion rules. DSS has partnered with Brunswick County library staff who participated in the ambassador training allowing them to assist individuals who use the library computers to apply for Medicaid via ePass. DSS staff is also receiving an influx of Medicaid applications. **(Closed)**

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **FAIR MARKET RENT SECTION 8 PROGRAM:** Mr. Stanley reported the Housing Committee has reviewed the information in the handout. Staff is asking this Board to recommend to the Commissioners that the Fair Market Rent be raised to 120% of the HUD published FMR. Ms. Lytch added that every year the FMR is published in October and Public Housing Agencies decide to set their own FMR between 90-110% of the HUD FMR. Over time people could not find a place they could afford and the percentage has been gradually moving higher. Staff currently has 18 people who have been looking some time for a home. Mr. Stanley added that these are all Federal dollars. **Dr. Williams made a motion to recommend to the Brunswick County Commissioners to change the Brunswick County PHA FMR from 110% to 120% of HUD's published FMR. Mr. Reaves seconded the motion. The vote to approve the program change to 120% of HUD FMR and recommend forwarding to County Commissioners for consideration was unanimous. (Closed)**
- B. **APPLICATION FOR ARMY SURPLUS DONATION PROGRAM:** Mr. Stanley discussed an application that goes to the Department of Defense to provide organizations surplus items to be used as a memorial. He explained there could be expenses such as foundation/pad, liability insurance and fencing. The county has made an application. **(Info)**
- C. **LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP):** Mr. Stanley announced the Low Income Energy Assistance Program will open on December 1st for those age 60 and above or disabled. Ms. Lytch added the program offers a one-time help with the cost of heating. **(Closed)**
- D. **VACCINE UPDATE:** Mr. Howard reported that Immunization's services have run very smoothly this year. The Flu/COVID vaccination campaign was very effective in reaching children through age 99. Staff worked with many variations of these vaccines based on age, as well as different supplies for the uninsured, which all had to be kept separate. Outreaches were held throughout the county with 1,100 COVID and 2,119 flu vaccines given. Staff still has doses to offer throughout the winter season. **(Info)**

- E. **FY 25 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING WORKSHOP:** Mr. Stanley noted that staff is working on their individual program department goals. They look at what is needed to be worked on and set strategic goals/priorities to assist in the budget process. The Commissioners shared their strategic planning at their last meeting. Health & Human Services goals will be shared at the next meeting. **(Open)**

- F. **NORTHWEST WATER TREATMENT PLANT EXPANSION UPDATE:** Mr. Stanley advised the Board of the current status. The Commissioners have received an update. The work has been delayed about a year due to supply chain issues, COVID, and re-work of some of the work. **(Info)**

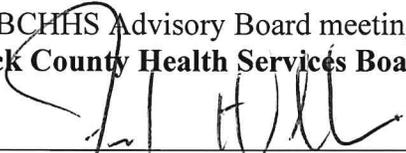
- G. **HHS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE CHANGES:** Mr. Stanley discussed the organizational changes approved by the Commissioners at their last meeting. Emergency Medical Services has been moved to Health & Human Services. Part of the reasoning is to see what opportunities there are to leverage resources and develop a community paramedicine program. **(Closed)**

- H. **HHS ADVISORY BOARD CALENDAR FOR 2024:** Mr. Stanley asked if the Board agrees with the proposed 2024 calendar. **Ms. Carver made a motion to accept the 2024 Health and Human Services Advisory Board Meeting Calendar. Ms. Narron seconded the motion. The vote to accept the calendar as presented was unanimous. (Closed)**

- V. **BOARD INPUTS:** Dr. Williams asked if there were any additional Board inputs. Dr. Gallagher asked the purpose of having a veterinarian on this Board. Mr. Stanley noted the rules and laws are in place regarding animal exposures that the Brunswick County Sherriff's Office and municipalities report to our Communicable Disease staff. If there is a candidate for post-exposure protocols, the health department determines where the quarantine takes place after looking at specific factors to determine if a home confinement is warranted. **(Info)**

- VI: **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, **the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m. with a motion by Mr. Carroll. Ms. Carver seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The next BCHHS Advisory Board meeting will be held on **January 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Brunswick County Health Services Boardroom.**


 _____ Chairperson


 _____ Secretary

Brunswick County Health and Human Services

Advisory Board Attendance Roster 2023-2024

NAME	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Asbury		*	X	*	X	*						
Carroll				A	X							
Carver	X		X		X							
Cooke	X		X		X							
Gallagher				A	X							
Jones	X		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Narron	X		X		X							
Pickens	X		X		X							
Reaves	X		X		X							
Ward												
Williams	X		X		X							

A = Month Appointed/Installed

C = Conflict with CC's Meeting

O = Off Board

X = In Attendance

V = Vacancy

AA = Approved Absence

Blank Space = Absent

Quorum equals six members present.

^ = Specially Called Meeting

*** = No Meeting**