

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
February 28, 2022 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. Flint King at 6:38 p.m. in the Health Services Lobby (Building A).
- A. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Dr. King asked for public comments. There were none.
- B. SPECIAL PRESENTATION:** Dr. King asked if there were any special presentations. There were none.
- II. REGULARLY OCCURRING ITEMS:**
- A. ATTENDANCE:**
1. The following members were present:
 - Dr. Flint King, Chairman
 - Mr. Hubert Reaves
 - Mr. Gene Ward
 - Dr. Justin Asbury
 - Ms. Cindy Carver
 - Ms. Lisa Narron
 - Mr. Marty Cooke
 2. Members absent:
 - Mr. Michael Norton
 - Dr. Allen Williams
 - Dr. Jerry Smith
 3. Staff members present:
 - David Stanley, Health & Human Services Director
 - Cris Harrelson, Health Services Director
 - Cathy Lytch, Social Services Director
 - Anita Hartsell, Veteran Services Director
 - Cherie Browning, Director of Nursing
 - Danny Thornton, Environmental Health Director
 - James Murray, Business Manager
 - Marjorie Rayl, Quality Assurance Specialist
 4. Guests present: None

- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the monthly meeting held on **January 24, 2022** were reviewed. Dr. King asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none. **Mr. Ward moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Carver seconded the motion. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous. (Closed)**
- C. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:** Dr. King asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. There were none. **Mr. Cooke moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Reaves seconded the motion. The vote to approve the agenda as presented was unanimous. (Closed)**
- D. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
- 1. VETERANS SERVICES:** Mrs. Hartsell announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities specifically pertaining to respiratory, auditory, and mental disorders, and they are giving the public 60 days to provide comments. The VA states these proposed updates will enable them to incorporate modern medical data and terminology to provide veterans with more accurate and consistent decisions. By incorporating modern medical data in the assessment of disabilities and how they impact earning capacity, veterans will receive evaluations which more accurately compensate them for their service-connected disabilities. No change to a veteran's current rating would occur due to these proposed changes. If the changes are finalized, veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition can apply for increased compensation, but no reductions shall be made unless an improvement in the veteran's disability is shown to have occurred. The public has 60 days to provide comments regarding the updates via the Federal Register notices on the regulations.gov website. **(Info)**
 - 2. CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS:** Ms. Browning reported that the team last met on February 8th and reviewed four cases, not three as previously reported. There were no system problems found. The next meeting is scheduled for April 12th to review four more cases. **(Info)**
 - 3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** Mr. Thornton noted that the Wastewater Protection Program still has a backlog of newly submitted applications, some being 10-11 weeks out. The State has been notified that a specialist is ready to be authorized. With 105 active applications, 53% are within the 4-week turnaround time. Staff completed 79 site evaluations, issued 52 improvement permits and 66 construction authorizations. They also inspected 39 new wells and sampled 17. Food & Lodging is also working with two new staff hired. One is expected to be ready in March however, the other has just begun the training. Mr. Thornton hopes to get the newest staff member authorized for pools by the end of March. Staff will not meet 100% of inspections this quarter. A priority list has been implemented. In the past month staff has completed 98 inspections, 78 site visits, 10 plan reviews and issued three permits. Facility staffing continues to be an issue with restaurants showing an impact with lower food safety scores being posted. Pool season is here and staff has emailed pool operators notifying them to visit the website for the most updated information and requirements. The information was mailed out in previous seasons. Mr. Thornton also discussed a recent recall of infant formula. Staff visited all county childcare centers to ensure the formula has been removed. None of the centers had any of the recalled product. **(Info)**

4. **HEALTH SERVICES:** Mr. Harrelson discussed a partnership with Novant and Doshier hospitals to develop a Community Needs Assessment which is due the end of calendar year 2022. There will be a contract with a vendor to oversee the project, the cost being split between the partners. The Brunswick County legal team needs to review the documents. Mr. Harrelson announced that BCHS recently received funding earmarked to help support COVID efforts by adding certain positions. The first is a school health nurse liaison, who is already in place, to be funded only through FY 21/22. The second position is using ARPA Funding for school nurses or school-based health services personnel through FY 22/23. Staff has met with the school system. The Board of Education and school system are considering whether to accept the funds. Thirdly, communicable disease funding has been promised to Brunswick County, although not yet received. In the FY 21/22 budget the legislature allocated \$36 million, \$18 million/year. Brunswick County's allocation totals \$207,408 for FY22 and for FY23. The Commissioners approved the use of funds to hire two temporary CD nurse positions. He added that staff is waiting for funds to be received before moving forward. **(Info)**
5. **HHS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:** Mr. Harrelson reviewed the Environmental Health customer survey report in which 128 surveys were mailed out in October. Of the 18 that were returned, 17 noted having an excellent experience in their interaction with the department. One survey did not respond. **(Info)**
6. **NC LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Mrs. Lytch discussed Session Law 2021-180 which addresses the Special Assistance Program and its four parts. She said that the SA IH Parity is on pause with Automatic Medicaid pending CMS approval. It offers a cash supplement for the cost of a facility or assistance in staying in their home. The removal of CAP on SA IH slots would make this equal to an entitlement program and wide open with no way to know how to budget as the county does not receive any additional dollars. Mrs. Lytch noted \$48 million non-recurring temporary financial assistance for licensed facilities. This is 100% State funded using ARPA funds. According to the session law, the SA rate will change on January 1, 2024 and every January thereafter. This rate has not changed in years. The rate is indexed to the Social Security COLA each year. This is 50/50 state/county funded. The current personal needs allowance is \$46. SFY22 allows \$4 million and a \$5.4 million recurring personal needs increase from \$46 to \$70 per month. This program is also 50/50 state/county funded. **(Info)**
7. **PUBLIC HOUSING SERVICES:** Mrs. Lytch reported that there are currently 30 vouchers that have been issued but not leased up. Staff are reaching out to those who have had their voucher for over 100 days to discuss barriers and needs. **(Info)**
8. **SOCIAL SERVICES:** Mrs. Lytch noted the State is working on a Managed Care Plan for Foster Care. Staff has resumed processing FNS recertifications. Previously the State was doing it automatically. The Public Health Emergency waiver has stopped. Staff continues to process MA recertifications, however benefits continue. Staff will have to look at eligibility for Medicaid and will need to reassess within 60 days from the end of the PHE. Mrs. Lytch announced that the REDA audit discussed last month was completed in January and she has received the results but not the final report from the State. She noted that Brunswick County passed two of the three areas and was just shy of passing the third. Error trends are tracked and incorporated into training to continuously improve processes. **(Info)**

9. **HHS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:** Mr. Stanley reported eight open positions between Health and Social Services asking those interested to go to the county website for more information. **(Info)**

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **COVID-19:** Mr. Harrelson reported a 60% decrease in the average number of cases per day over the last week from 77/day to 47/day. The 25- to 64-year-old age range accounted for 54% of cases and 15% are age 17 and younger. Brunswick County has also seen a decrease in the percent positivity to 15% after a high of 40% at the peak of Omicron. New Hanover's percent positivity is 12.7%, Columbus 11.1% and Pender 13%. The State over all is at 7.1%. The vaccination rate in Brunswick County is 65% with at least one dose and 62% fully vaccinated. Mr. Harrelson noted that, as of February 21st, NC DHHS is no longer recommending individual contact tracing in K-12 schools. They recommend students and staff no longer be required to stay home from school following a COVID-19 exposure unless they have symptoms or test positive. This is a huge change. **(Open)**
- B. **COVID-19 RESPONSE PLANNING STATUS:** Mr. Harrelson announced that the COVID vaccination clinic was moved back to the Health Department on February 24th. All operations are now at Building A with staff still doing some outreach. **(Open)**
- C. **MEDICAID TRANSFORMATION UPDATE:** Mr. Stanley reported there have not been a lot of changes at this time and suggested this item to be closed. **(Closed)**
- D. **VACANT HHS ADVISORY BOARD POSITION:** Mr. Stanley noted he is working with a local doctor to get some names and will have an update at the next meeting. **(Open)**
- E. **BRUNSWICK WELLNESS COALITION UPDATE:** Mr. Stanley asked that this item be closed at this time. **(Closed)**

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

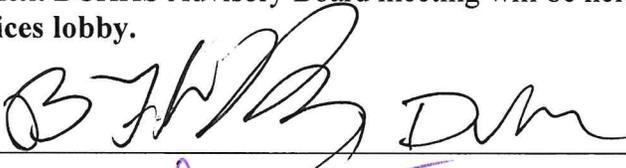
- A. **NC DHHS FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES:** Mr. Stanley noted that advisories are posted by the State periodically, most recently in September 2017 and October 2021 regarding mercury and other levels in fish. These have included areas in Brunswick County in the Cape Fear River and Sturgeon Creek. The advisories have been out for a while and posted on the state website. A recent request asked Brunswick County to post signage in areas such as boat ramps and fishing piers to make people aware of the danger. Mr. Stanley and Mr. Harrelson are looking into what other counties, including New Hanover, are doing. There is no State funding and landholder's permission would need to be obtained as well as deciding who would handle the upkeep of the signs. **(Open)**
- B. **OPIOID SETTLEMENT STATUS:** Mr. Stanley reported that \$13,613,830 is coming to the county over several years and programs are being reviewed for funding. More details will be released by the Attorney General's Office soon. **(Info)**

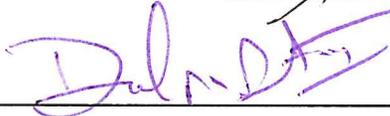
C. **ANNUAL COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT:** Mr. Harrelson reviewed the report which was included in the packets. He noted that Brunswick County has higher incidence rates than the NC average in both acute and chronic hepatitis C. Only about 20-30% of people with new infections will experience symptoms. **Dr. King made a motion to recommend the 2020 Communicable Disease Annual Report be forwarded to the Brunswick County Commissioners for review. Ms. Carver seconded the motion. The vote to forward the 2020 Communicable Disease Annual Report to the County Commissioners was unanimous. (Closed)**

V. **BOARD INPUTS:** Dr. King asked if there were any additional Board inputs. There were none. (Info)

VI: **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, **the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m. with a motion by Mr. Ward. Mr. Cooke seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The next BCHHS Advisory Board meeting will be held on **March 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in the Health Services lobby.**


_____ Chairperson


_____ Secretary

Brunswick County Health and Human Services

Advisory Board Attendance Roster 2021-2022

NAME	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
King	X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X			*	
Asbury	X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X			*	
Carver	X		X	X	X		X	X				
Cooke						A		X				
Narron	X	X	X	X		*	X	X			*	
Norton	X	X	X	X	X	*	X				*	
Reaves	X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X			*	
Smith	X	X	X		X	*	X				*	
Sykes		X			X	*	O	O	O	O	*	O
Ward	X	X	X	X	X	*	X	X			*	
Williams		X	X		X	*	X				*	
Optometrist	V	V	V	V	V	*	V	V			*	

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