

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
July 22, 2024 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 6:32 p.m. in the Cooperative Extension Training Room.

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. Howard introduced Health Services Employees of the Quarter for quarters one and two. Aleaha Parrish-Estep, EH Technician, was recognized by her coworker as a huge asset to the team and providing excellent customer service. Mr. Thornton praised her for learning quickly while the department had a staff shortage. Joshua Cumbee was recognized by his coworker as someone who is always in a good mood, praising and supporting staff. Because of Josh, she has learned how to respond to difficult situations and has grown as a person.

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. Lauren Gallagher
Ms. Lisa Narron
Mr. Chip Carroll
Dr. Travis Pickens

2. Members absent:

Dr. Justin Asbury
Mr. Gene Ward

3. Staff members present:

Cathy Lytch, Health & Human Services Executive Director
Rich Ohmer, Social Services Deputy Director
Anita Hartsell, Veteran Services Director
David Howard, Health Services Director
Danny Thornton, Environmental Health Director
Cherie Browning, Director of Nursing
Lyle Johnston, EMS Deputy Director
Marjorie Rayl, Quality Assurance Specialist

4. Guests present: None

- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the monthly meeting held on **March 25, 2024** were reviewed. Dr. Williams asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none. **Mr. Reaves moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Carroll 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. There were none. **Mr. Reaves moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Carver seconded the motion. The vote to approve the agenda was unanimous. (Closed)**
- D. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
- 1. VETERANS SERVICES:** Ms. Hartsell reported that veterans enrolled for care with the VAMC Fayetteville (including local VA clinics) who have urgent medical questions can call the newly created Clinical Contact Center (855-679-0074) 24-hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. The center includes pharmacy services, primary care scheduling, and clinical triage to talk with a nurse. **(Info)**
 - 2. CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS:** Ms. Browning noted the team has not met since the last meeting. The next meeting will be held on August 13th. **(Info)**
 - 3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** Mr. Thornton reported his section is still in the process of hiring and training new on-site staff. Staff completed 50 site evaluations, issued 56 improvement permits, and 44 construction authorizations, and inspected 33 private wells, issuing 24 well permits. Mr. Thornton shared how the new Pool Specialist position has strengthened the program. **(Info)**
 - 4. HEALTH SERVICES:** Mr. Howard provided an update on the flooring project in the Health Services building. Mr. Howard reported that staff are moving the Immunizations section to a different area, creating a separate draw room for lab patients as well as updating the lab. **(Info)**
 - 5. NC LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Mr. Howard gave an update on Senate Bill 425 which included a technical change in the qualifications for Health Directors. It added a bachelor's degree in a field related to Public Health with at least seven years of experience, a change from the previous three years. The bill also added a phrase to allow the human services director to appoint the local health director with the county manager's approval. Mr. Howard also discussed the state's \$1 billion surplus to spend in the fiscal year that started July 1. **(Info)**
 - 6. HHS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:** Ms. Lytch discussed the recent improvements to the DSS phone system/call center. The public now has three options when calling the main number. The system is streamlined so people can get who they need to speak to right away, wait in the queue for the next person, or opt to have a callback. **(Info)**
 - 7. PUBLIC HOUSING SERVICES:** Ms. Lytch announced that staff received a Certificate of Appreciation for their collaboration in helping to house veterans. They helped the VA reach their goal of housing 36,000 veterans. **(Info)**

8. **SOCIAL SERVICES:** Mr. Ohmer discussed the NC-PAL Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative for Child Welfare Pilot that Brunswick County DSS has been a part of (one of three counties) for the past year. The program provided case consultation, resource support, and case-based learning to help improve multi-system management of behavioral health needs in collaboration with the local DSS staff. Mr. Ohmer reported that having bi-weekly meetings, the ability to call them anytime and have access to their expertise has been a great benefit. Last week the team from NC-PAL presented a certificate recognizing participation in the program and provided an update of accomplishments for the pilot's first year. **(Info)**
9. **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:** Mr. Johnston reported that June's call volume was down compared to May. May was busy and July will be as well. Already this month staff responded to assist Southeast Healthcare Preparedness in evacuating a hospital in Pender County, assist in a missing person case in Brunswick County, and work an Oak Island structure fire. Mr. Johnston reminded everyone to be careful in this heat. **(Info)**

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **VACANT HHS ADVISORY BOARD POSITIONS:** Ms. Lytch noted an engineer is still needed. Dr. Pickens may know someone who may have an interest. Mr. Cooke recommended sending a letter out to engineering businesses. **(Open)**
- B. **FY 2024 DSS ENERGY OUTREACH PLAN:** Ms. Lytch discussed the energy plan that is used to make the community aware of the programs and to work with community partners. The plan uses federal dollars and has been submitted to the Brunswick County Commissioners. **(Closed)**

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **FY 2025 BUDGET:** Department Heads shared new budget item goals. Mr. Howard thanked the Commissioners for three new positions; Interpreter, Processing Assistant (WIC), and Public Health Nurse, all of which are currently being recruited for. He also noted the expansion of text communications and the achievement of offering online payments in Environmental Health. Ms. Hartsell said that the additional Veterans Service Officer position will improve wait times for veterans. Mr. Johnston reported the new positions will help to get the Community Paramedic Program up and running. There were also equipment items including ambulances, which along with the new Logistic Specialist and Data Analyst positions will increase the efficiency of the department. Ms. Lytch reported that Public Housing continues to work through the waitlist with last year's average being 280 participants with an additional 20 leased up now. Social Services is currently recruiting several new positions which will support recruiting foster parents and kinship providers with the Kinship Navigator position. An economic services staff trainer position has been added within the department to support the caseworkers. **(Closed)**
- B. **NEW HHS BUILDING:** Ms. Lytch announced the RFQ has been submitted for the new 95,000 to 100,000 square foot building to house Emergency Management and Emergency Medical Services on the first floor and Public Housing, Health Services (including Environmental

Health), and Social Services on the second floor. The building is expected to be completed by early 2026. Departments currently have some staff doubling and tripling in offices. **(Info)**

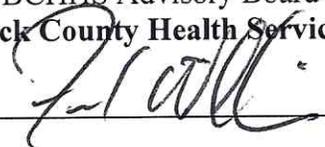
C. **OPIOID FUNDING PROJECTS:** Ms. Lytch discussed five projects, DSS Clinician (expand support groups), Christian Recovery Centers, Inc. (treatment centers), BCHS Health Educator (collaborate strategic planning), Community Paramedic Program, and the ARROW Program (in-prison addiction treatment). **(Info)**

D. **SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMISSION NAME CHANGE:** Ms. Lytch noted, that with recent discussions on expanding the focus on mental health, the name has changed to Substance Use, Addiction, and Mental Health Commission. Two member positions have also been added to include Trillium and a local mental health professional. **(Closed)**

V. **BOARD INPUTS:** Dr. Williams asked if there were any additional Board inputs. Ms. Narron announced this would be her last meeting as she is resigning. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on this Board since 2016. Ms. Lytch asked if the Board members had any specific items they would like to see on future agendas. **(Info)**

VI: **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, **the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. with a motion by Ms. Carver. Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The next BCHHS Advisory Board meeting will be held on **September 23, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Brunswick County Health Services Boardroom.**


_____ Chairperson


_____ Secretary