

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
July 26, 2021, 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 6:35 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. Mr. Stanley introduced new board member, Cindy Carver. He has gotten to know her over the last 18 months as she has volunteered the health department with COVID call lines and vaccine clinics, even assisting with the Veterans program. Ms. Carver said she has been an RN for 49 years working mostly with maternal and child health patients in the inner city. She moved to Brunswick County ten years ago. Mrs. Lytch introduced Jennifer Britt as DSS Employee of the Quarter. Jennifer came to DSS in September 2012 with ten years of experience. She joined as a supervisor while NC FAST was just rolling out. Her peers praised her for being supportive, a hard worker and always willing to jump in wherever needed.

II. REGULARLY OCCURRING ITEMS:

A. ATTENDANCE:

1. The following members were present:

Dr. Flint King, Chairman
Dr. Jerry Smith
Mr. Hubert Reaves
Ms. Lisa Narron
Mr. Gene Ward
Dr. Justin Asbury
Mr. Michael Norton

2. Members absent:

Dr. Allen Williams
Mrs. Pat Sykes

3. Staff members present:

David Stanley, Health & Human Services Director
Cris Harrelson, Health Services Director
Cathy Lytch, Social Services Director
Danny Thornton, Environmental Health Director
Cherie Browning, Director of Nursing
Marjorie Rayl, Quality Assurance Specialist
Jennifer Britt, Social Services IM Supervisor

4. Guests present: None

- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the monthly meeting held on **June 28, 2021** were reviewed. Dr. King asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections. **Mr. Ward moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Reaves 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. Norton moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mrs. Narron seconded the motion. The vote to approve the agenda as presented was unanimous. (Closed)**
- D. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
- 1. VETERANS SERVICES:** Mr. Stanley noted that Ms. Hartsell has provided him with information on the No Veteran Left Behind Act which will be discussed under Item D6-North Carolina Legislative Update. **(Info)**
 - 2. CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS:** Ms. Browning reported there will not be a meeting in August due to having no cases to review. The next meeting will be held on October 12th. **(Info)**
 - 3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** Mr. Thornton reported there was one wastewater file that did not meet the four-week turnaround goal. Workloads continue to see an increase in the Soil and Water program. Staff is still monitoring COVID complaints with none being received last month. In June, Food and Lodging staff visited 188 establishments, reviewed 24 plans, and issued 10 permits. **(Info)**
 - 4. HEALTH SERVICES:** Mr. Harrelson announced that the Brunswick County WIC program has been selected as one of six counties in the state to participate in the pilot of a USDA/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC grant which aims to decrease barriers of access to WIC services and increase focus on tailored nutritional needs. The pilot will begin in early 2022. From March 2020 until May 2021, the WIC program has experienced a caseload increase from 2388 participants served monthly to 2823 served monthly which is an 18.2% increase. COVID-19 funding has increased the WIC Cash-Value Benefits to \$35 per month from June to September. North Carolina has seen an increase in fruits and vegetables cash-value benefits redemption in the first two months. Mr. Harrelson reported that Care Management staff are having meetings with representatives of the five Health Plans that now manage Medicaid. Medicaid will continue to use the standardized screening tool to identify and refer women at risk for adverse birth outcomes to the Care Management for High-Risk Pregnant Women program (CMHRP). Care management for At-Risk Children (CMARC) will continue to be managed by local health departments.
 - 5. HHS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:** Mr. Harrelson reported that there were 60 surveys completed by Women's Health patients in March with 44 of the women rating their experience as excellent and 16 as good. Out of the 58 responses, 55 said everything about their visit was easy to understand. There were also multiple praises for their staff. Other comments included statements regarding the lack of an Adult Health clinic, their desire to pay by credit card and pay online, as well as their desire for weekend and extended hours. Mr. Stanley explained that certain Federal government programs offered

at the health department do not allow credit card fees to be charged which precludes the patient from use of our credit card payment system. However, staff will continue to investigate the use in qualifying non-federal programs. **(Info)**

6. **NC LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Mr. Stanley reported that NC House Bill 370 “No Veteran Left Behind Act” became law on July 1st. It is a pilot program to assure awareness of resources available and focuses on dealing with veteran-specific crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and available resources at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The pilot includes Brunswick, Craven, Cumberland, Onslow, Union, Wayne, Chatham, McDowell, and Nash Counties, as well as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. Mrs. Hartsell will bring more details in the coming weeks. The VA gives an annual suicide prevention report each year, however, it only gives national figures. Mrs. Hartsell has also reached out to Schimona McBryde, Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the Wilmington Health Care Center, to come to the August meeting and share what is available to assist veterans with suicide prevention. **(Info)**
7. **PUBLIC HOUSING SERVICES:** Mrs. Lytch said staff is working to improve their lease up numbers. Staff is also working on a Cares Funding proposal in preparation for next month. **(Info)**
8. **SOCIAL SERVICES:** Mrs. Lytch reported the Economic Services staff resumed seeing clients in person on July 1st. There was not a big influx in traffic and there were no issues or concerns. Social work program staff never stopped seeing clients throughout the pandemic. The ES program continues to be auto extended through the end of September due to the PHE. It is expected to continue through the end of 2021. She also noted that NC DHHS will be using federal funding from the American Recovery Plan to assist individuals who have had their water service disconnected or are at risk of disconnection. This is a one-time funding. The state will be posting the plan for public comment prior to submitting for approval. Once approved, it is anticipated that the benefits for group one will be issued in November or December, the same time as LIHEAP. Letters will be sent to those who received LIHEAP (those less than 130% of the Federal poverty level). These federal dollars will go directly to the utility provider. The Child Tax Credit in the American Rescue Plan provides the largest Child Tax Credit ever and historic relief to the most working families ever. It increased from \$2,000 per child to \$3,000 per child for children over the age of six and from \$2,000 to \$3,600 for children under the age of six and raised the age limit to children under the age of 18. **(Info)**
9. **HHS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:** Mr. Stanley reported several open positions posted on the county website. Included are Income Maintenance Caseworker I and III, Social Worker III, Social Worker Supervisor, Nutritionist, and Health Educator. **(Info)**

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **COVID-19:** Mr. Harrelson reported an increase in COVID cases with Brunswick County adding 377 since Independence Day weekend, averaging 20 cases per day. Staff has requested an additional Case Investigator from CCNC to assist with case investigation and contact tracing. The total number of vaccinations given in the past four weeks is 555, an average of 139 per week. Vaccine appointments at Health Services have increased as well as an increase in

outreach clinic patients. About 40-50% of our Pfizer vaccine has been given to kids aged 12 to 17. Calls to the COVID line have decreased to 172, down since the last meeting. Calls are down 76% since May 1st. The COVID line has received 172 calls since our last meeting which is a decrease of 38%. There has been a 76% decrease in calls received since May 1st. **(Open)**

- B. COVID-19 RESPONSE PLANNING STATUS:** Mr. Stanley reported many vaccine outreach events happening with details listed on the Brunswick County website. Staff is working to vaccinate as many people as possible with the increase in cases due to the Delta variant. It is affecting more children as shown by the positive cases coming out of camps and private schools. There were 90 new positive cases in the past weekend, three weeks after the July 4th holiday. Mr. Stanley noted the good news is that over 80% of Brunswick County residents 65 and older have been vaccinated. He reviewed the COVID-19 Partner Briefing distributed at the meeting. Of the positive cases 14% were fully vaccinated. The vaccine has been successful in keeping people from going into the hospital or having severe illness/death. **(Open)**
- C. MEDICAID TRANSFORMATION UPATE:** Mrs. Lytch reported that the State is committed to ensuring that individuals receive needed medical services and medication during this transition since going live on July 1st. Brunswick County has received a few complaints that have been forwarded to the State and enrollment brokers. DSS interpreters have received a lot of complaints regarding the enrollment broker customer service, such as, being transferred to different extensions and their calls ending up in different states, like New York, without any satisfactory answer. Some Medicaid clients are also being miscommunicated regarding the Managed Care program. Instead of allowing the clients to change to the health plan the client prefers, they have been told to come to DSS and re-apply for Medicaid. Mrs. Lytch noted that before Managed Care, the long-term care facilities could look Medicaid in NC-TRACKS with no need for prior approval. Now they are having difficulty receiving approval for clients due to the insurance companies wanting prior authorization. **(Open)**

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. COUNTY HEALTH STATISTICS:** Mr. Harrelson reviewed handouts on cancer deaths and suicides in Brunswick County and North Carolina. Cancers are the leading cause of death in Brunswick County with 376 individuals having died in 2018 from cancer. Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco are responsible for the majority of all lung cancers of the lung, trachea, bronchus, larynx, pharynx, oral cavity, and esophagus. Patients are screened for behavioral risk factors such as smoking and offered smoking cessation assistance. The BCHS website offers information on e-cigarettes and a link to the NC Quitline for assistance with tobacco cessation. Early detection is extremely important. The BCHS Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provides free or low-cost screenings to eligible women. BCHS partners with NC DHHS and Novant Health to provide many services including mammograms and cervical cancer screenings. Brunswick County partners also provide programs for health and wellness promotion. Mr. Harrelson reviewed Brunswick County suicides noting in 2018 there were 18 suicides in residents ages 10 and older with 25 suicides in 2019. Children taught at home results in less socialization, nutrition issues, and not being educated as well. There are many ramifications other than death. Mr. Harrelson noted that drug use and alcoholism has increased as well. **(Closed)**

B. HOPE PROGRAM: Mrs. Lytch discussed the Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Eviction (HOPE) program being utilized in Brunswick County as part of a statewide effort (88 non-metropolitan counties) to address renter needs due to the coronavirus. The objective of the program is to provide housing stability to vulnerable renters including \$800 million to assist families. Coronavirus pandemic-related impacts include families having to pay extra for childcare and increases in other expenses. The family does not have to have had a loss in income or be behind in the rent in order to qualify for assistance. The program will provide up to 12 months of fair market rent assistance. Assistance is paid directly to the landlord. If a family is receiving rent assistance, they may also apply for utility assistance. The information for this program has been shared with staff and community partners. Residents may apply online or over the phone. A sister program is being worked on now to assist people with mortgages. **(Closed)**

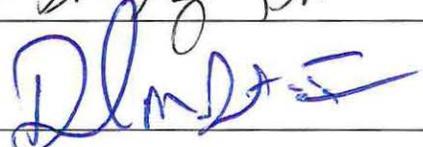
V. BOARD INPUTS: Dr. King asked if there were any additional Board inputs. **(Info)**

VI: ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, **the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. with a motion by Mr. Ward. Ms. Narron seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The next BCHHS Advisory Board meeting will be held on **August 23, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Health Services boardroom.**



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					*					*	
Asbury	X					*					*	
Carver	X											
Narron	X					*					*	
Norton	X					*					*	
Reaves	X					*					*	
Smith	X					*					*	
Sykes						*					*	
Ward	X					*					*	
Williams						*					*	
Optometrist	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**