

COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

PO Box 489
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Phone: (919) 542-2759
Fax: (919) 542-6355



Jennie Kristiansen, Director

Social Services Board
Richard Edwards
Thomas Droke
Valerie Broadway
Carl Thompson, Sr.

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Meeting Minutes March 17, 2021

The March meeting was conducted by GoToMeeting due to COVID-19. Members in attendance: Richard Edwards, Chair; Tom Droke, Vice Chair; Valerie Broadway, Member; Carl Thompson, Member; Jennie Kristiansen, Director and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Richard Edwards called the meeting to order.

Tom Droke motioned to approve the February meeting minutes as amended with a second motion from Valerie Broadway; with all in favor.

Emily Lowrance resigned her seat on the board due to ongoing medical issues. The board discussed posting the vacancy and a county press release through May 1, 2021.

Review of Monthly Data

Ms. Kristiansen reviewed the monthly data report. For childcare subsidy, preliminary spending for February was 101.87%. Final numbers were not yet available. Ten children were removed from the waitlist using some additional Smart Start Funding. CPS timeliness had 18 accepted reports for the month of February. Four were initiated outside of timeframe, with a timeliness of 78%. Two of the four cases were initiated within 3 hours of the time frame and were late to accommodate a parent's schedule. In another case, a courtesy request was sent to the county where the child was located. The agency provided an incorrect fax number to the social worker so the request was not received, nor the family seen within time frame. In the last case, the report was regarding a newborn who was seen (along with mother) within time frame, however, there was another child in the home (who was not a sibling) who was not seen within the time frame.

Economic Services Updates

Chatham County was selected to be in round 2 of the new requirement for certification of economic services caseworkers. All caseworkers (new and existing) will be required to pass an exam and hold a certificate. Chatham County is in phase II that will begin in April.

Medicaid transformation open enrollment to managed care began the week of March 15th and runs through May 14, 2021. Beneficiaries can select a plan by phone, online, mail or by the Medicaid app. Enrollment Brokers, who help beneficiaries with plan selection, will not be physically located in DSS offices, but will be assigned to counties and be available starting March 22, 2021. There will also be a dedicated line for DSS employees to call and ask questions. The DHHS media campaign was also underway to educate beneficiaries regarding transformation and enrollment.

The Food and Nutrition Program had extensions to USDA waivers granted for the use of telephonic signatures until April 30, 2021 and maximum household allotment for the month of March 2021. BJ's was added as the sixth online vendor approved for use with Food and Nutrition benefits. Pandemic EBT benefits were also continuing (no new information from last update).

There were several provisions in the American Rescue Plan to impact poverty including unemployment benefits, tax credits, emergency assistance, housing, childcare, and LIEAP. There had not been any significant guidance issued yet, but Ms. Kristiansen will provide updates as additional information as it becomes available.

Family Services

The child welfare division participated in a state Child and Family Services On-Site Review two weeks earlier in March. This was an extremely in-depth review of one child welfare case that examined all aspects of child welfare. The tool was approximately 60 pages long and interviews with the family and the social worker were conducted. The exit interview was scheduled for March 17th.

NC was working on updating of the Structured Decision Making Tools. These standardized tools include safety, risk, and reunification assessments. This was the first step toward implementation of a statewide practice model. The goal of the practice model was to ensure consistency across counties and improve outcomes for children and families. Safety Organized Practices (SOP) is an "umbrella" of services that includes working with and across differences, structured decision making, signs of safety, family team meetings, solution-based inquiry, partnership based collaborative practice, trauma informed practice, appreciative inquiry, and solution focused interviewing. It is anticipated that implementation in counties will begin in late 2021 or early 2022.

Cyber Update

Some problems remained with encrypted email and a bug in Microsoft O365 that was impacting some employee's email and access to shared office files. Emergency Management was planning to issue a survey to county departments regarding the cyber attack and how the county could be better prepared for any future problems. Notification letters for individuals whose information was stolen were being finalized the week of March 15th.

COVID Update

DSS employees were starting to be vaccinated although not everyone who would like to be vaccinated received a first dose yet. Plans were underway to reopen the waiting area at the beginning of May. Masks and social distancing will be required for visitors and are already required for all employees.

With no further items to discuss, there was a motion to adjourn from Tom Droke with a second motion from Carl Thompson; with all in favor.

The next board meeting will be held Wednesday, April 21st at 3:00pm via GoToMeeting.



Chair

6/26/21
Date



Secretary

6/16/21
Date