

COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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489

Valerie Broadway, Chair
Cecil Wilson, Vice Chair
Thomas Droke, Member
Sara Welch, Member
Memory Dossenbach, Member

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Session Meeting Minutes January 18, 2023

Members in attendance: Valerie Broadway, Chair; Thomas Droke, Member; Sara Welch, Member; Jennie Kristiansen, Director; LeAnn McKoy, Evaluator/Planner; Donna Gigowski, Economic Services Program Manager; Jonathan Soto, Medicaid Transportation Coordinator, and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Valerie Broadway called the meeting to order.

There was a motion to approve the December Meeting Minutes from Tom Droke with a second motion from Sara Welch, with all in favor.

Jonathan Soto gave a presentation to the board on Medicaid Transportation services.

Review of Monthly Data:

There were 13 accepted reports in December. Two reports were initiated outside of timeframe, with a timeliness of 85%. In one report the child had been taken to another state and the other report was seventeen minutes outside of timeframe (and the family's schedule had been accommodated).

Economic Services Updates:

The Public Health Emergency is scheduled to end in April and the federal Medicaid Omnibus Bill signed into law 12/29/22 decouples the continuous coverage requirement from the COVID Public Health Emergency. States will no longer be required to maintain continuous Medicaid coverage as of 4/1/23. NC elected to implement the recertification requirement on April 1st to allow for a longer transition time. In preparation, Division of Health Benefits (DHB) is seeking to implement flexibilities designed to reduce the need for contact with beneficiaries to complete processing, decrease processing time, and reduce burdens on beneficiaries who pay premiums.

DHB also developed a list of recommended supports for local DSS agencies: central call center for eligibility related questions and to process information changes (such as address) to reduce call volumes at local DSS, funding to support staffing (to allow for increased wages or hire temporary staff for administrative tasks), establishing NC as a FFM determination state (so that eligibility for Medicaid would be determined at the FFM instead of being sent to counties), and to relax the requirement of two forms of residency. NC is the only state that requires two forms of residency, and this delays processing if residency cannot be verified using electronic sources.

Along with the Medicaid policy changes, on April 1st the NC Healthchoice (Children's Health Insurance Program) and Medicaid merger will take place and the Tailored Plan will launch. Funds are still available for all three energy/water programs with 348 applications received in December. Funds are almost exhausted for both the CIP program (approximately \$6,000 of a \$155,000 remaining) and LIHWAP (approximately \$3000, of \$65,000 remaining). There was \$120,000 remaining in the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. This was the first year that energy providers were enrolling in the portal to allow payments to be issued by NC DHHS instead of counties. There were numerous problems with this process both related to system functionality and provider willingness to enroll. This caused some confusion across the state about how to handle payments and delays on pledged payments to energy providers. NC DSS hosted several provider trainings during the past few weeks to encourage enrollment. Counties may receive another allocation of LIEAP funds as Congress approved another large sum of LIEAP funds but no amount has been released. There was a workgroup established to evaluate the best use of those funds to help counties.

Work in the Food and Nutrition Program is underway to implement several technology improvements using SNAP ARPA (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program American Rescue Plan Act) funds. Electronic notices launched 12/17 and text messaging is scheduled for implementation by April 28th. Improved reporting will also be provided to counties with new dashboards with real time information to be implemented by 9/30. Finally, there will be an online option for both eligibility redetermination and change of circumstances through EPASS by 9/30/23. NC will continue to ask for waivers of telephonic signatures to maintain this flexibility for beneficiaries too.

Childcare subsidy expenditures remained lower than usual at approximately 82% statewide. There was a retroactive rate increase to providers during this fiscal year and these are continuing to be paid (two more installments) which is raising the spending co-efficient. In Chatham, children are being added to the program with no waitlist.

Family Services:

Caitlin Howison, CPS Supervisor, is organizing a training for the Multi-Disciplinary Team on child abuse investigations with Deb Flowers. Ms. Flowers spent most of her career at UNC, first helping to establish the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners program and then serving as a pediatric nurse practitioner at the Child Medical Evaluation Program, providing inpatient consultation for children presenting with non-accidental trauma. She now works in Child Advocacy Centers serving Moore and Harnett counties. The Multi-Disciplinary Team is designed to improve services to children and families when there are allegations of abuse or neglect that may result in criminal charges. The MDT meets monthly and is comprised of representatives from DSS, law enforcement, Victim Services Coordinator, and the District Attorney's office. Guardians' ad Litem, Judges, and DSS social workers have also been invited to the training.

NCDSS provided an update to counties on preparation for Round Four of the Child and Family Services Review. This is a comprehensive federal review that involves evaluation of data, engagement of partners, file reviews, and interviews with parents and other providers. In the last round, no state passed all areas of the review and NC's performance drove a number of child welfare transformation initiatives. In preparation for the review, NC DSS is working on data accuracy to ensure that information

is being reported correctly, developing a statewide Continuous Quality Improvement plan to more consistently review and evaluate data, and setting goals for performance improvement.

The Chatham County child welfare leadership team was invited to attend three days of racial equity training with NC DSS leadership. This workshop will later be offered to the entire state child welfare team and Chatham County social workers will be able to attend.

Agency Updates:

The mid-year review evaluation process used a new modified process for 2023. Each employee and supervisor met to review performance and a set of questions was shared with management team members to guide the review. Any employee whose performance needed improvement or did not meet performance expectations received a full written evaluation.

The Housing and Homeless working group met virtually to continue development of shared mission, vision, and values. There is a subcommittee that is planning for a point in time count for people experiencing homelessness. Training and the count will take place next week. Ms. Kristiansen sent out information regarding volunteering. Internally, a job description has been drafted and sent to the county manager's office for review. The provider subcommittee of the Housing and Homelessness working group is also finalizing a release of information.

The budget process is well underway with department expansion requests due on January 20th and estimated year end budgets for fiscal year 22-23 due at the end of January. DSS will be submitting requests for an additional foster home licensing position to support the kinship initiative, additional positions in contingency should NC expand Medicaid, a supervisor position for intake and adult services (to bring staffing into recommended rations), and the establishment of a Medicaid Program Manager position. State budget estimates are due to counties on February 15th. NC DHHS is in the process of completing budget recommendations and have indicated the following priorities: behavioral health and resilience, child and family well-being, and a strong and inclusive workforce.

In February, Ms. Kristiansen and Ms. McKoy will be hosting two training opportunities for employees on the updated Electronic Records and Imaging Policy. This is a policy required by the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and includes information regarding managing public records, use of software, disaster recovery and security.

Chatham County and FASD informed are hosting a workshop next Friday featuring national experts on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The workshop is virtual, and anyone is welcome to attend.

There will be a Presentation on Foster Home Placement Process during the February board meeting.

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

The next meeting will be held February 15, 2023 in the ground conference room of CCDSS at 3:00.

Valerie Broadway

Chair

[Signature]

Secretary

2/15/23

Date

2/15/23

Date