

The Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board met on May 27, 2022 at 12:30 p.m. This was a virtual meeting.

- Health and Human Services Board Members: Johnnie Grant, Vice Chairperson; Amy Lenell, Elizabeth Lima, LeeAnne Tucker, Carol Coulson, Steven Valeika, Yvette Jives, Jackie Hallum, Dan Frayne, Savannah Lamb, and Mona Ellum were in attendance.
- Health and Human Services staff: Stoney Blevins, Rebecca Smith, Phillip Hardin, Stacie Saunders, Jennifer Mullendore, Stacey Wood, Lisa White, Kelli Buckner and Chiloh Reece were in attendance.
- Curt Euler, County Attorney was in attendance.
- Community members: Pat Johnson was in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

- Health and Human Services Board Vice-Chairperson, Johnnie Grant, called the meeting to order at 12:30.

REVIEW AND ACTION OF BOARD AGENDA

- Health and Human Services Vice-Chair, Johnnie Grant called the meeting to order at 12:30. A quorum was not present therefore Vice-Chair Johnnie Grant moved the meeting into an informational session.
- The agenda is attached and made a part of these minutes.

PRESENTATIONS/UPDATES

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The Community Benefits and Opportunities committee reported out on their work since August 2021. It was stated that the majority of the committee work so far has been foundational, giving the committee the information about the vast array of programs in the Economic Services area. Also presented to the committee was the data that comes with the programs it administered. One resounding theme from the committee was that we need to better at communicating about our programs and using multiple platforms to get the information out. There was also discussion in the work of the committee about how do we integrate services with other areas of HHS as well as community partners.

The presentation talked about the various programs the committee has looked at:

- Food and Nutrition Services
- Housing Assistance
- Small pieces of the Medicaid program
- Child Support
- Energy Programs

The committee also invited and heard from the Health Promotions area as well as the WIC Program to see how to better align services with them. There was also discussion of the Public Health Emergency waivers ending as well as the outlook for Medicaid expansion in NC.

At almost every meeting the committee talked about better communication about our programs, both internally and externally. There have been some positive outcomes of these discussions such as updated materials about programs, new partnerships with community partners, better tools on web site and also live Facebook programming about our services. The committee will continue to work in the communication area for the foreseeable future.

In the coming months the work of the committee will focus on the Medicaid program as well as if expansion occurs how do we roll that out. We also want to delve more deeply into integration of services within HHS as well as with our community partners. The presentation is attached and made part of these minutes.

COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION/CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM

Dr. Jennifer Mullendore, Chair of the Buncombe County Community Child Protection Team/Child Fatality Prevention Team (CCPT/CFPT), presented the team's 2021 annual report to the Board. She reviewed the purpose of the local CCPT/CFPT and the role of the HHS Board. She shared data on the causes of death for the 21 children who resided in Buncombe County at the time of their deaths in 2020. The predominant causes of death for all ages were accidents (1 fatal injury from a firearm, 1 drowning, and 2 infants who died from accidental suffocation and/or strangulation in bed). 16 of the 21 fatalities (76%) occurred in infants. When looking specifically at infant mortality, birth defects and prematurity were the leading causes of death. The data was broken down by race/ethnicity and gender. She shared the system problems identified by the team, their recommendations to address those problems and the actions taken on those recommendations.

While not contained within the annual report, Dr. Mullendore mentioned the shooting deaths of children in a Texas school earlier this week as an example of something that a CFPT would review. There was 1 gun-related homicide and 1 accidental death by firearm among Buncombe County children in 2021 and there have been several other gun-related deaths in prior years. She put forth that the HHS Board, in their advocacy role, could publicly identify firearm deaths as a public health problem and advocate for gun control. Mona expressed interest in this.

The presentation and details are attached and made part of these minutes.

DIRECTOR REPORT


Director Blevins continued the discussion on how the HHS Board could promote gun safety in Buncombe County. He agreed to speak with Executive Committee about planning strategic discussion at next month's board meeting. Several proclamations were made by Commissioners this month that honor HHS work. Specifically, these are (1) Public Health Nurses Week, (2) Foster Care Awareness Month and (3) Older Americans Month. Finally, an update was given on Medicaid expansion efforts underway in the NC Legislature. The Senate favors expansion and has put forward a bill to do so. The House seems reluctant to approve the measure at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

- Vice-Chairperson Johnnie Grant thanked the presenter and attendees for participation in this informal meeting.



Johnnie Grant
Health and Human Services
Board Vice-Chairperson



Stoney Blevins
Executive Secretary to the Board