

# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD



## Board Members

Mr. John Blalock  
Mr. John Davenport, Jr., PE  
Dr. James Doub, OD  
Dr. Palmer Edwards, MD  
Dr. Brooke Griffith, Psy.D  
Dr. Calvert Jeffers, DVM  
Dr. Charles Massler, DDS  
Dr. Linda Petrou, PhD.  
Ms. Sharon D. Pettiford, RN  
Ms. Sharon A. Rimm, LCSW  
Dr. Peter Robie, MD  
Mr. J. Phil Seats, R.Ph., MBA  
Dr. Ricky Sides, DC  
Ms. Claudette Weston  
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt, County Commissioner

### Chair

Ms. Heather Parker

### Vice Chair

Mr. Fleming El-Amin

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

### MINUTES

August 2, 2023

### MEMBERS PRESENT – IN-PERSON

Ms. Heather Parker, Chair  
Mr. Fleming El-Amin, Vice Chair  
Mr. John Davenport  
Dr. James Doub  
Dr. Brooke Griffith  
Dr. Calvert Jeffers  
Dr. Linda Petrou  
Ms. Sharon Pettiford  
Dr. Peter Robie  
Mr. J. Phil Seats  
Dr. Ricky Sides  
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

### STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Shontell Robinson (Virtual)  
Ms. Christine Dowdell (Virtual)  
Ms. Denise Price  
Mr. Joshua Swift  
Ms. Lorrie Christie  
Ms. Tanya Donnell  
Mr. Josh Jordan  
Mr. Daniel Lemons  
Ms. Nihya Payne  
Ms. Nicole Priddy  
Ms. Amanda Pruitt

### MEMBERS PRESENT – VIRTUAL

Dr. Palmer Edwards  
Dr. Charles Massler  
Ms. Sharon Rimm  
Ms. Claudette Weston

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. John Blalock

### Call to Order:

On Wednesday, August 2, 2023, the Forsyth County Health and Human Services (HHS) Board held its regularly scheduled bi-monthly hybrid meeting. Ms. Heather Parker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

### **Moment of Silence:**

A moment of silence was observed by all.

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair:** Ms. Shontell Robinson explained that each year the Board has to elect/re-elect the Chair and Vice Chair. The nominating committee is comprised of Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt and Dr. Calvert Jeffers. The nominating committee is tasked with making a motion or accepting candidates on the floor. On behalf of the nominating committee, Dr. Jeffers submitted the present officers, Chairwoman, Heather Parker and Vice Chair, Mr. Fleming El-Amin. Dr. Linda Petrou made a motion to adopt by acclamation and Dr. Ricky Sides seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Consideration of Minutes:**

The minutes of the June 7, 2023, HHS Board was reviewed. Dr. Petrou made a motion to approve and Mr. El-Amin and Mr. John Davenport seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment Period:** No comments.

**Deputy County Manager's Comments:** Ms. Robinson gave the following updates:

**Cure Violence Update** – Ms. Robinson reported that the Cure Violence Team is up and running – boots on the ground. On last Saturday, they had their first community event in Cleveland Avenue Homes and it was well attended. Ms. Robinson added this was their official kickoff and as they continue to be boots on the ground we will be able to provide more information. Ms. Robinson informed Board members that she hopes to have some data to share with them at the next meeting. The Cure Violence Team is called Forsyth Wins and this will be an item that Mr. Joshua Swift will start updating the Board on, at each meeting.

**HHS Community Feedback Sessions and Survey** – According to Ms. Robinson, two community feedback sessions have been held in July and also a survey has been put out for the month of July. The purpose of the survey was to get feedback on our Health and Human Services campus. Ms. Robinson stated that this feedback session was mostly to help determine how to best utilize Annex 2, which is the old Monarch building. To give Board members a better idea of the exact location of the building, Ms. Robinson described that next to Department of Social Services (DSS) is Annex 1, which houses Child Support, Pharmacy and Bridges to Hope in it – next to that is Annex 2, which is completely vacant at the moment. Ms. Robinson will be providing some recommendations to the Commissioners this month on how to best utilize that facility. She added they wanted to get some community feedback to help guide them in that work or what resources and services the community sees that they may need. Ms. Robinson stated it does not have to be something that Health and Human Services provides, ourselves – it could be community organizations. These are the types of ideas we wanted to hear. Once Ms. Robinson and the team have had a chance to synthesize the survey and the feedback, she will get that information out to the Board because she believes it would be helpful to see the feedback from the community.

**HHS Campus Projects** – Ms. Robinson spoke about the following projects that are currently in the works for the Health and Human Services Campus:

- In the design phase for some renovations in Public Health (PH) and DSS.
  - In PH it is primarily for the clinic area which is pretty dilapidated. We also want to try to renovate some areas on the ground floor and in the lobby.
  - DSS will be mainly a lobby renovation, to expand it and make it look more welcoming. Ms. Robinson and the team will meet with the architect for both projects, next week.
  - The auditorium is in the contract phase and will be in the design phase soon (the Auditorium is in Annex 1).
  - Park construction – had the kickoff meeting today. Will soon begin the design phase.
  - Grounds beautification is pending but we are waiting on estimated cost for PH before we can get started trying to do new signage and maybe different greenery around the campus.
  - Highland Avenue Center - this primarily has to do with the facility based crisis center and is where Ms. Denise Price and her team will be working – Ms. Price will talk about this in her updates.
  - Annex 2 – the Old Monarch Building – the Commissioners have identified potential funds for us to do some renovations. We need to come up with a plan to best utilize that building.

Ms. Robinson stated that most of the projects will be complete in 2024. She told Board members that at some point, they can expect to start seeing a lot happening on the campus. Ms. Robinson added it is an exciting time for our staff and the community and although it sits on Highland Avenue Health and Human Services, it serves our entire county and we want to make sure it is welcoming to everybody in Forsyth County and is a good place to be.

**Department of Social Services (DSS) Director's Comments:** Ms. Christine Dowdell, gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

- *Operation Fan Heat Relief:* Ms. Dowdell reported that the agency does this each year through the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, who provides the agency with funding. They received \$3,275.00 this year, to purchase 131 fans at the cost of \$25.00/fan. Adult Family Services will also present the request to the Board of County Commissioners to seek approval to use the funds on August 10<sup>th</sup>, which is done every year. The agency also received a donation in the amount of \$250.00 from Ardmore Moravian Church, Ladies of Circle 3 group, to purchase additional fans. The agency provided additional funds in the amount of \$1,000.00 to purchase 37 fans. Recipients have the choice of either signing up and picking up the fan or an Adult Family Services staff member can deliver it to them. Ms. Dowdell stated that they recognize with the heat index being up, they are checking on our citizens and providing fans to them, that are in need.
- *Adoptions Unit:* Ms. Dowdell stated that this fiscal year, the agency met a goal from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to finalize adoptions and as a result, the agency received approximately \$230,000 from the state,

which will be used to enhance our adoption services. According to Ms. Dowdell, that money can only be used towards adoption activities as well as recruitment of foster to adopt families. We are hoping to have an adoption event in November, which is adoption month.

- *Teacher's Apple Tree:* Ms. Dowdell reported that DSS will partner with Cook Elementary School, this year and provide school supplies for teachers that are on their apple wish list. They have a list on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor – the information is written on paper apples, that is on the tree and they pick an apple from the tree. Last year they were able to support the teachers at Ashley Elementary School.
- *Medicaid Expansion:* Ms. Dowdell reported they received a lot of information from a press release for Medicaid Expansion, which is expected to launch on October 1, 2023, contingent the budget is approved by September 1, 2023. Ms. Dowdell acknowledged they are in the process of trying to prepare, hire staff, post positions and conduct interviews. She added, they know it is on the rise and want to make sure they are prepared.

**Aging Conference** – Ms. Dowdell spoke about their upcoming Aging Conference and is excited to have NC Secretary of State, Ms Elaine Marshall, who will be the guest keynote speaker during the luncheon at the Aging Conference. The conference will be on September 19, 2023 and will be held at Gailee Missionary Baptist Church. Ms. Dowdell stated the conference will provide helpful information and resources to older adults and caregivers in Forsyth County. Registration should have already started at the beginning of August. Ms. Dowdell told Board members she would be updating them soon with more details and if anyone was interested in attending to please let herself or Ms. Robinson know and they can register them for the event. Ms. Dowdell stated it is going to be a great time and they are excited about it.

Ms. Whisenhunt asked Ms. Dowdell how was the school chosen, for who they are going to support. Ms. Dowdell responded she would have to get more information about that but from her understanding they do a rotation, but she can get more clarification and send it back to her. Ms. Whisenhunt asked for clarification if Ms. Dowdell was saying rotation on the schools. Ms. Dowdell responded yes – they focus on the elementary schools but she can get more information regarding the selection process. Ms. Whisenhunt responded sometime she would like to see a county elementary school receive some of this attention and thanked Ms. Dowdell for what they do.

Mr. El-Amin asked to be registered for the conference Ms. Dowdell spoke about on Aging.

**Department of Public Health (PH) Director's Comments:** Mr. Joshua Swift gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Before starting his updates, Mr. Swift mentioned that Dr. Peter Robie had sent a question to Ms. Robinson and himself about Malaria. There have been some cases in Florida. Dr. Robie asked, what we would do in that case. Mr. Swift stated he spoke with our Communicable Disease (CD) nurses and Mr. Ryan Harrison, who is over our Vector Control Program. He continued on to say that malaria is not infectious from person to

person – the CD efforts will be focused on identifying any travel history to areas endemic from malaria – the person that did travel to an area that was endemic, we would shift our focus and if they did not, we would focus on mosquitoes and our Vector Control Program and focus on where the person lives and make sure they are doing the larviciding, which is killing the larvae before they hatch. Also, in the spring, you see the trucks – they try to trap as many mosquitoes off the property as possible and test them through the CDC and get information out to the public advising people to wear repellent. Mr. Swift stated we also encourage people on another thing we do called tipping talks – that is leaving any standing water. Mosquitoes can breed in as much water as a bottle cap – it is not only the stagnant water – it is any little bit of water. Mr. Swift continued on to say even though malaria does not spread person to person, if a person went to Florida and they came back with it, we would want to make sure they limited their exposure outdoors because if they were bitten by a mosquito and mosquitoes travel – we have the same species of mosquitoes that they are seeing in other places – they can carry malaria. Mr. Swift explained, just like with COVID, we had the contact tracing to try to hold down COVID to keep it from spreading – the same goes, with malaria. You want to keep people from getting bitten so the mosquito does not spread that blood to someone else.

**State/Federal Budget:** Mr. Swift stated that we are paying attention to the budget, it affects a lot of things – focus on Medicaid Expansion. The CDC funding cuts that was on the news several weeks ago is not affecting public health in the local level directly, but indirectly is affecting our states and their communicable disease and their disease intervention specialists (DIS) that go out in the field – if you have HIV cases and do interviews to find contacts, those are state employees and it is affecting those positions.

**Environmental Health:** There have been state changes to laws to allow more flexibility to allow more persons to qualify as Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) – they used to be more specific on the 30 hours of sciences – it gives more flexibility on the types of sciences now that are allowed for a REHS. The changes also added an associate position – has less science and can do less work in the field – they can do well water tests, category 1, food establishments like concession stands or write temporary food permits and fairs.

**CMARC/CMHRP:** Mr. Swift reported that the state is looking at the Care Management for At-Risk Children and Care Management for High-Risk Pregnancies programs that have prepaid health plans and Community Care of NC. We could see some changes in June 2026 where we have been guaranteed to have those contracts for those prepaid health plans – will work with four right now but that could be slowly, but in 2026.

Mr. Swift shared the following division updates:

***Personal Health Services:***

- Working with our state consultants with getting an applicant flow analysis to help us better serve the community

***Community Health Services:***

- Food and Lodging – received a 97% inspection compliance rate – a 50%

improvement. Mr. Swift is proud of the great work that team has done.

There will be a Food Safety Forum on September 7, 2023 at 8:00am. Restaurant operators can come to the forum for two days (1 day is in English and 1 day is in Spanish), with a regional consultant who is bilingual, to offer that.

- Onsite wastewater or septic backlog has improved – it is now 4 ½ weeks – the repairs have went up a little – now 4 weeks. We have new staff starting in September.
- WIC – new waivers; there is ore flexibility now to better serve our clients. With COVID, it was fully remote – now clients can come in or not.
- School Health – we are one of the first health departments in the state where we are going to have direct access to our new PMR that we are implementing, called SNAP software. It will be fully integrated with North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR). This will save our staff hundreds of hours of data input – can also get data from any other county.
- LAB – Fingers crossed – we have a new lab manager.

#### ***Internal Health Services:***

- Emergency Preparedness – is always staying abreast. All of our state operators and Director of Nursing and Preparedness attending statewide training on shelter operations.
- EPI & Surveillance – doing outreach to collect data at our recreation centers on food insecurity.

#### ***Preventive and Health Education Services:***

- Minorities Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) – hosting new sites in Surry and Davidson County. We serve 7-8 counties in the area. We have classes in Wilkes County. The participants meet 26 times over the course of a whole year. They learn about what to do knowledge wise and about behavior change. The average person that goes through the program loses ten pounds. Mr. Swift commented it is really a great program – it is a CDC program and is evidence-based.
- Health Promotion Program – working with stores in the area that have certified healthy stores for free fruits and vegetables from the Simons Garden.

#### **COVID Update:**

- Monitoring wastewaters – state reports every week. This is municipalities throughout NC. We are seeing a slight uptick across the whole state and we are seeing it here. This summer compared to last summer the COVID was four times higher. We are still waiting on September guidance as far as vaccines in the fall. Mr. Swift asked the state epidemiologist if we will have to pay for vaccine this year – we have funds set aside. Mr. Swift stated we are planning to buy as much COVID vaccine as we do flu vaccine, which is roughly 5,000 doses. There are a lot of options and places to go where it is available. The CDC guidelines get very complicated – depending on your age and if you are immune compromised, we are encouraging the moderately or severely immunocompromised – you may get additional doses of updated Pfizer and Moderna COVID19 that we are doing. People 65 and older may get a second dose of the updated Pfizer or Moderna COVID19 vaccine now.

- Free COVID test kits are available at the health department and all Forsyth County library branches. We also still have 24/7 kiosks.

**Public Health Events – Save the Date:**

- Men’s Health basketball game – Saturday, August 5, 2023
- 12<sup>th</sup> Annual “Walk a Mile to Save Our Babies” – Thursday, September 7, 2023.  
Location is supposed to be Missionary Baptist Church.

Before ending, Mr. Swift shared that he took his A-Team (Assistant Health Directors and Supervisors) to the Winston-Salem Police Foundation opening day T-ball League at Rupert Bell Park.

Dr. Jeffers asked what the turnout was for last year’s food safety forum. Mr. Joshua Jordan responded we were coming off of COVID – it was our first inaugural year. He added they had about 30 individuals in person and another 15 or 20 virtually – in total, around 40-50 people attended. Dr. Jeffers then asked if there were incentives to encourage. Mr. Jordan mentioned they offered door prizes and they also gave our educational materials. He added they are trying to concentrate on Spanish speaking communities and told Board members to feel free to come by for the upcoming forum (October 7, 2023 will be in English and October 8, 2023 will be in Spanish).

Ms. Sharon Rimm asked if the Malaria that has come up on the radar – is there any sense of Leprosy, having been moving up toward our area. She was reading that Central Florida has several cases right now – not necessarily from the immigrant population – is that anything that NC is looking at. Mr. Swift responded he would have to talk with the Communicable Disease team. He added it did not come up at his Raleigh meeting two weeks ago. He is sure at the state, they are monitoring that but he will see what he can find out.

Dr. Robie shared, there is a difference – Leprosy is caused by molecular bacterial organisms similar to tuberculosis. Malaria is a parasite. With Leprosy you have a genetic predisposition to get it. Dr. Robie stated there are more people coming from other countries to the US. It is a little bit different than what happened in Florida with Malaria, where the person that got Malaria in Florida, travelled nowhere.

Dr. James Doub shared that when Zika was hitting everywhere, the individual had been in South Carolina and ended up coming to Forsyth County – came down sick – testing positive for Zika. Mosquitoes were actually tested in an area in Forsyth County and got positive tests. Mr. Swift responded, we are very fortunate to have Mr. Harrison – he is nationally known for Vector Control. We are hoping to get some extra funding for our Vector Control Program through the CDC.

Dr. Brooke Griffith asked a question about the new legislation that goes into effect about the restriction on gender affirming care for people under the age of 18 who have not started on it yet. Does this impact any of the services that we provide at the Health Center or the programming that we do? Mr. Swift responded this question has come up, since we do not provide any medical procedures or home hormone therapies or medication – nothing.

**Behavioral Health Director's Comments:** Ms. Denise Price reported the following (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

Ms. Price started by sharing that they just completed their one year anniversary as a new division and stated it has been a whirlwind of a year. They are beginning to see how their efficiencies are improving in bringing the group together.

**Substance Use Health Education:**

- Ms. Price gave a few updates about what is happening since starting renovation, starting with hiring a new health educator, Ms. Annie Vasquez. Ms. Vasquez started in March and is pushing them in innovative and new ways. Ms. Vasquez is doing road trips to visit some of their nontraditional partners. Recently she visited businesses in the 27105 area, providing education regarding naloxone, where it is available at no costs, and distributing naloxone and flyers for sharing when the businesses were amenable. All locations visited minimally allowed educational materials to be left/posted. During those visits, Ms. Vasquez reported that hotels wanted their employees trained on how to use naloxone because they are seeing overdoses. She talked to gas stations about if they would be interested in hosting some of the newspaper stands that you can put the naloxone in and people can utilize it and they will not open to the discussion. Ms. Price stated these may be conversations that we have to have ten times but these conversations are starting. This is something that Ms. Vasquez will do on a reoccurring basis – she will follow our overdose data, see where the highest need is until we can begin to see some attrition and then we will look at other areas. Ms. Price stated, we want to engage our nontraditional partners.
- Ms. Price shared they are planning with Winston-Salem Transit Authority to do some reoccurring on-site resource fairs and it will not be limited to Behavioral Health Services but will be open to the Health and Human Services and others, as well. Ms. Price mentioned that there have been articles in the newspaper, about how the Winston-Salem Transit Authority has been experiencing increased needles being disposed of on the property – they, too, were seeing overdoses. Ms. Price stated that they want to look at how they can work together to bring resources to the population that uses Winston-Salem Transit Authority. They want to educate employees and hopefully reach out to more of our community.
- Ms. Price was excited to announce they have finalized a Stigma Index, that will be distributed this month. They are waiting for the Annex 2 feedback survey to close before sending it out. She does not want to over survey the community but explained that this would give them an idea of where the community is in terms of stigma with substance use. In order to have their baseline when they are implementing media campaigns and strategies, they have to do this, so they have a sense of what is making an impact and what is not. Ms. Price explained this was created, using Shadowproof's model – they have reduced it down through a grant they have with the National Association of Counties and City Health Officials. Ms. Price stated they had access to some resources that they otherwise would not have. She shared that partners from the CDC and NACCHO, a statistician from the University of New York and the New York Department of Health and Hygiene assisted.



- Ms. Price reported a new naloxone policy will allow employees to carry naloxone and provide training for how to use it, should they experience or come across someone who they believe has overdosed. They will be rolling the training out over the next month. Ms. Price reported that at Pride Winston-Salem, they distributed almost 500 naloxone kits and added that is an event they plan to be every year. She added that the number of people that came through and the cross section of population that they had the opportunity to speak with was phenomenal.

### **Pharmacy:**

- Ms. Price shared that the Pharmacy, no longer focused on COVID related duties, is refocusing on traditional pharmacy functions, such as re-launching the 340-b committee. Ms. Price explained that 340-b is the lowest drug pricing available. They are able to get medications at a fraction of the traditional wholesale costs. Ms. Price stated it is a huge discount but there is a lot of regulation that goes along with that. We must make sure medications are only dispensed to allowable populations. Ms. Price shared that they have re-launched their committee with an expanded membership to assure that they are continuing to do things in compliance. She added, they are seeing an increase in prescriptions and said that part of that is driven by the employees of the Wellness Clinic.

### **Stepping Up:**

- Ms. Prices reported that Stepping Up is working with the Detention Center, to plan around their fairly newly received grant that allows for expansion of medication assisted treatment.
- They recently presented at an event for faith leaders.
- Ms. Whisenhunt asked if the Board members received invitations to the Stepping Up graduation. Ms. Price thought they had received them. Ms. Whisenhunt told Board members that the graduation was at 10:00am tomorrow morning on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Government Center and she would make sure they get an invitation – Ms. Whisenhunt warned Board members to bring tissues.

Ms. Price continued to report that the tailored plan implementation has been delayed – they do not have an exact date yet for what the next target date will be – it is contingent on the budget.

Ms. Price shared they are turning the page with the Highland Avenue Project – they have moved pass the design phase and getting ready to roll into construction. There will not be a lot of activity on this for a couple of months before this next stage is permitted and they are lining up their construction partners to do the work. Ms. Price explained they will finish the first floor with focus on a facility-based crisis center. The reason for that is because there is a huge need and they have some operational costs through ARPA, to sustain the first couple of years of operation as they build out their sustainability plan long term. Next, they will build out the second floor that will see more outpatients upstairs in the Behavioral Health Section that will be there. Ms. Price said after that, they will go back downstairs and build out the Pharmacy area – that becomes more of a one- stop-shop for individuals with behavioral health needs.

Ms. Price reported they are having a second community conversation session on suicide on September 21, 2023 at Carver High School. She said they had a Thursday evening activity with approximately 75 attendees and it was very impactful. Ms. Price added, a lot of personal stories were shared and you began to sense the pain in our community. People who attended that first session are being invited to Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training. Ms. Price explained it is a next step – what can you learn to help some to engage with some that might be hurting or at risk of suicide.

Ms. Price shared that they finished interviews for their Senior Office Assistant position – this is a new vacant position. They made a recommendation to Human Resources this morning.

### **Community Events:**

Ms. Price announced some important dates for Board members to be aware of:

- International Overdose Awareness Day – August 31, 2023
- National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day – August 21, 2023
- National Suicide Prevention Month – September 2023
- National Opioid Awareness Day – September 21, 2023

### **Overdoses June 1 – July 21, 2023:**

- Ms. Price provided some overdose data for the period of June 1 – July 21, 2023. She told Board members that she will periodically share this with them. Ms. Price said her team is looking at this on a weekly basis and explained it is a subset of the overdoses for our community. Overdoses range in age from 2 to 82 years old. There were 10 deaths reported (2 Heroin, 2 Fentanyl, 1 Methamphetamine and 5 Unknown). The data shows that EMS administered Naloxone on 135 non-fatal calls and Naloxone was not administered in 91 non-fatal calls.

### **New Business:**

**Energy Program Outreach Plan** (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder): Ms. Amanda Pruitt introduced herself as one of the program managers at DSS. Her department has the energy programs which include the Crisis Intervention Program, also known as the CIP and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). These programs are federally funded.

Ms. Pruitt reported that each year the state requires them to formulate an Energy Outreach Plan, to include committee memberships and partnerships with agencies and outreach to target potentially eligible households that primarily includes for our area income based housing – we have a partnership with a number of income based housing communities that are listed, in addition to Crisis Control Ministry and some other community partners such as YMCA and Senior Services of Forsyth County. Ms. Pruitt added they also use social workers within the department in their Adult Services Division as well as their work first cash assistance team to help support and do outreach when they go out on their visits. Ms. Pruitt stated that especially during the LIHEAP season, which is during the winter months

and that helps – it is a one-time payment that helps offset the rising costs of their primary heating source during those winter months (December through March).

Ms. Pruitt shared they have committee meetings that are listed on the document, as well. They will have a kick-off in September for information that they plan to drop off through Forsyth County Schools and Smart Start. They will also have a virtual meeting that they do annually with some of those community partners, mainly those income based housing properties. They do application packets that contain the applications and a lot of the income based housing property managers help their residents fill them out but Ms. Pruitt stated they will also have some of those sent out to some of their other community partners for the intent of receiving those beginning in December.

Ms. Parker stated it is her understanding they need to have a motion to approve the communication plan. Ms. Robinson responded, yes. Mr. El-Amin made a motion to approve and Dr. Jeffers seconded. All members were unanimously in favor of approving the Outreach Plan.

**Remote Participation Policy** (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder): Ms. Parker spoke to Board members about the remote participation policy found in their packets. She explained the policy is for Commissioners to be able to set the Board up with the ability to have meetings in person, hybrid or be fully remote and it would have to be approved every first meeting, after July and this would be the time that they could do that. Ms. Parker asked if someone could make a motion. Dr. Petrou made a motion to continue the meetings as is and Mr. El-Amin seconded. All members were unanimously in favor.

**Educational Opportunity – Food and Lodging** – Mr. Joshua Jordan, thanked the Board for having him and introduced himself as the Program Supervisor of the Food, Lodging and Institutions (FLI) section, of Environmental Health (EH). Mr. Jordan has 15 years experience in EH, at both the local and state level. Mr. Jordan started in Davidson County as an inspector in 2008 and was promoted to program specialist and a coordinator. He took a position with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) in 2015 as an EH Regional Specialist – that role was as a support person for the counties and Forsyth County was one of his counties. The following year, Mr. Jordan was promoted to the supervisor. He was hired here in 2021 to manage our food program (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder).

Mr. Jordan stated they have put a lot of work into their program as far as initiating some positive change in the community and handling those mandated inspections that were supposed to come as you can see from our 97% compliance numbers.

Mr. Jordan went on to explain about the types of inspections they are charged with and told Board members that for the most part, they are affected by what they do in their program.

- Food establishments are a big part of what they do and inspect. Mr. Jordan explained they utilize the food code and North Carolina (NC) has their own version of the food code. The food code is derived from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA comes out with a new version of the food code every four years. NC is currently

on the 2017 version. Mr. Jordan added there is a 2022 version but that has to be enacted by legislation for rulemaking on how to implement it. Mr. Jordan shared that the document they use to do their food inspections is about 220 pages long and it is science based and helps them make informed decisions on food safety. He explained they are not just passing along the regulation, but they are making decisions on what food is safe and providing the public health, reasoning to help prevent any foodborne illness in our community.

- Mr. Jordan said in their title, they have food, lodging, institutions – they do lodging, sanitation inspections at hotels, bed and breakfast homes and inns.
- Institutions - rest homes, nursing homes and hospitals. According to Mr. Jordan, they inspect those twice a year, as well as the hospitals (Baptist, Atrium and Forsyth Medical Center). Mr. Jordan commented that in the past, they have not been so well equipped to do those inspections but have been able to do them in the correct frequency for the last year and a half.
- Childcare Centers - they do sanitation inspections for childcare centers, which are inspected twice a year.
- Schools - his team does sanitation inspections for all the schools and private schools, when requested.
- Tattoos – if someone is tattooing in Forsyth County, they should have a permit that is renewable on an annual basis (includes things such as permanent makeup and scarification). Mr. Jordan explained they have a tattoo education program that they used to educate individuals in the school systems and at the hospital level to tell them about the potential problems or going through the process of getting tattoos. Mr. Jordan shared that they have recently been nominated for the Glaxo Smith Kline Award due to this project.
- Camps – Mr. Jordan explained if there is a camp that provides food, or lodging overnight accommodations – they have to inspect those.
- Local Confinements – the program is charged with doing the sanitation inspection for the Forsyth County Detention Center. They have to make sure the food is safe for the inmates and also address any concerns with the cell areas and the living quarters.
- Lead Poisoning – Mr. Jordan’s group is charged with making sure children six years and under, if they are poisoned through lead, they do an investigation to make sure they identify the hazards of those children and can remove that hazard, so the lead level in their blood can be reduced and they can be healthy and have a good brain function later down the road.

Mr. Jordan shared charts highlighting food establishments. There are 1,332 food establishments in Forsyth County. He stated a lot of their effort and how they work is in the food industry – it makes up 68% of all the establishments that they inspect and about 80% of all the inspections they do is in food establishments. Mr. Jordan stated 80% of their work is done for our safety.

Ms. Whisenhunt asked if there are more tattoo artists than there are childcare centers. Mr. Jordan responded yes – there has been a surge over the last several years. Mr. Jordan states they have 219 tattoo artists, at this time. He added, in NC you have to have a permit for every location where you are going to tattoo. The permit is based on the location where you will be tattooing.

Mr. Jordan reported that over the past five years, Forsyth County has really grown in the food industry. In comparison, in 2018 we were required to do 3,210 inspections – last year were required to do 4,603. That upward trending growth led to about 1,400 more inspections over the last five years. The team is working hard to get that high percentage of 97% while faced with a challenge of the industry growth and how we can maintain a solid workforce and be able to have a plan on getting these inspections done as mandated – the average increase of inspections over the last 5 years is about 275 inspections per year.

Mr. Jordan stated that the current workload assigned to his inspections team is around 320-340 inspections per year. There are currently 21 people on their staff – some are specialized in different programs, such as plan review, this is for someone planning to open a new restaurant, they have to submit plans to Environmental Health to review. Mr. Jordan shared, they were able to get two new vacancies this budget cycle and expressed his gratitude to the directors, county management and Commissioners for allowing them to get those two new vacancies. He stated it is very important to build that capacity in order to maintain the workload and have an excellence they are trying to achieve.

Mr. Jordan commented that all the work they do, they base on the FDA's guidance. The FDA has presented the Voluntary National Retail Food Program Standards – this program is given by the FDA to all jurisdictions in the US to help us have goals to achieve a consistent program that would be comparable to others in the country, the importance of that is being consistent with our food establishments or operators.

Mr. Jordan stated they currently meet two standards, #1 and #7: Standard 1) a regulatory foundation making sure they had the framework to do the inspections that utilizes the food code and has to be safe and assigned to a science based model; Standard 7) Mr. Jordan explained that standard seven is the standard that addresses the community outreach and the Food Safety Forum – they met this standard last year. He added, the goal of the forum is to have interaction with the community, including the operators and any individuals from the public and help them learn about food safety but also give them the ability to talk to staff and ask questions – have two way communication between regulatory and the food partners. Standard 2) Mr. Jordan stated they do not currently meet number two, but are actively working to standardize staff. Standardization helps to make sure they are trained and equipped to do the inspections. Initial training of staff takes about 6-9 months and standardization occurs within the first 24 months of employment.

Mr. Jordan shared, as part of the program standards, there are opportunities for grants they can utilize. The past two years, they were able to in 2022, get \$26,500 that they utilized to give things to people coming to the forum, to provide additional training to staff that they were not able to do in the past. This past year, they were awarded \$12,500 – not a lot, but enough to make a difference in their program, in the community. Mr. Jordan stated this year's grant cycle starts again this month and they want to work on conducting a risk factor study in our community – go to food establishments across the county and work on specific questions that are based on the risk factors that are most commonly associated with foodborne illness and try to identify what

our highest risk factors are, so we can make intervention strategies to try to lower the numbers. Mr. Jordan told Board members he would be glad to come back and share that information, when they get it.

Dr. Robie asked if they inspect food trucks and Mr. Jordan responded, yes we do.

Dr. Petrou asked if someone does not like your rating and your process, under the old health department, they could appeal to the Board of Health. Is there someone to appeal to? Mr. Jordan responded, the first thing is a formal review process, where they would go to the supervisor and the inspector – if they are not satisfied with that decision, they could go to the program supervisor and the director and then to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). They also have the ability to appeal a decision that has been made by going through the Office of Administrative Hearings, through Raleigh. Mr. Jordan commented that although everybody knows things to do, it is not always easy – the people they go to regularly, do not always want them there and it can be confrontational. He added, their main goal is to make sure the food is safe.

Dr. Sides commented, if you are sitting at a restaurant or bar and the food preparation is behind you and you see the kid dropped something on the floor, pick it up and start sitting glasses down – is this something you should report. Mr. Jordan responded, if it was something involving food preparation and a place they permit, it would be something they would look into. Mr. Jordan explained that they have a couple of different ways for accepting complaints. The website has a portal that you can enter complaints through a web email or you can call our office and submit a complaint. If it is something where someone has been ill or feeling symptoms of being ill, that is something they try to investigate within 24 hours in case there is foodborne illness involved. For general complaints, they try to get there as soon as possible and then try to get an inspection done to make the best use of their time.

Dr. Jeffers asked are restaurants supposed to provide warm water or cold water for handwashing for staff. Mr. Jordan responded the food code in NC says warm water for the food employees. There is not a specific temperature requirement for handwashing sinks only used by customers. Dr. Jeffers commented he has gone into restaurants and seen staff come in and the water was cold. Mr. Jordan responded the food code requires 100 degrees to be supplied to a handwashing sink but it talks about the water being warm during the cleaning procedure to activate the soap and to make the handwashing process comfortable and effective. Dr. Sides asked if that extends to the restroom and Mr. Jordan responded there are some loopholes and if the restroom is used by staff and customers, it should extend to the restrooms – if there is a staff only restroom, we focus more on the staff than on the customers. He added, it could depend on their setup, what you experience.

Mr. Sharon Pettiford spoke about the hospitals and felt there were different regulations regarding temperatures and need to be adjusted to get the temperature the same as the others. Mr. Jordan stated, that from an institutional setting, they have a maximum hot water temperature – they do not want to cause burn hazards. Ms. Pettiford added, everyone is always very thorough and very willing to work with the staff to make adjustments.

Mr. El-Amin asked Mr. Jordan if he had explained the nail salons. Mr. Jordan responded, he did not and added, unless the salons do permanent makeup, they would strictly fall under another division with the state along with hair salons and cosmetology inspections.

Lastly, Mr. Jordan thanked everyone for their support at last year's forum and told anyone that wants to come, to let them know.

**FROST Committee Update:** No update.

**Legislative Committee Update:** Dr. Petrou gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handout in the Administrative Binder):

- Taxes – want to lower the income tax for individuals but there was a dispute of different amounts they wanted to lower it to. She thinks they have come to an agreement.
- The Federal Department of Health and Human Services has allowed the state to go ahead with plans for October 1<sup>st</sup> and start the Preventive Care Medicaid Expansion.
- There are some figures on recertification of Medicaid recipients and by and large 75% of people they have investigated so far have been recertified for Medicaid Expansion. Some people lost their benefits that want Medicaid Expansion. The budget should be finished by mid August.
- The Governor is starting an Aging Program called “All Ages for All Stages NC”. If adopted, could help many of the senior citizens and people over 65 in the state. Dr. Petrou stated she was on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging – they gave recommendations for different items and Adult Protective Services and for the budget.
- The Crisis Lifeline – this has been a huge success. The 988 Suicide Crisis Lifeline has been in effect for one year. It was approved by the state legislature and implemented by the state. There has been a 31% increase in residents reaching out for support and 90% of the callers with thoughts of suicide reporting improvement and how they felt by the end of the call. It has been a very successful program. It is easier and faster for those seeking help with mental health and substance abuse to get help. The program is going to expand to have specialists with lived experience. Hopefully the will reduce the perceived stigma associated.
- Dr. Petrou spoke about the hospital survey done by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Forsyth Medical Center received three out of five stars; Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist received two-stars and three from patients. They need to do more work with patients receiving patient care. Centers for Medicare provide ratings for more than 4,000 hospitals nationwide, based on more than 150 categories with about 10% earning a five-star rating. The Federal Affordable Care Act requires Medicare to use quality metrics in setting payments. Dr. Petrou added, it is a rather detailed study.

Dr. Petrou concluded by saying they will hopefully be out in another two weeks – the budget will be fast. September 1, 2023, it will be ready for the formula to go ahead for Medicaid.

Before concluding the meeting, Ms. Whisenhunt asked everyone to wish Mr. Davenport the very best and said what a great job he does in what he is doing. Mr. Davenport thanked Ms. Whisenhunt and said this year would be a little different – they are doing the whole water park but at the end he will be flying to Uganda. They helped build a medical facility. There are doctors that come in and they wanted to have permanent facility for them. Mr. Davenport expressed his excitement that the facility would be opened up when he gets there.

**HHS Board Member Shadowing – Moment of Reflection:** No report.

**Adjourn:**

Dr. Petrou made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

SR/lgc

**Next Meeting: October 4, 2023 - 5:30pm**