



RICHMOND COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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North Carolina
Public Health

Heather Horne, Health Director
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director

Theresa Smith, Interim Social Services Director

RICHMOND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 18, 2025
TIME: 7:00pm
LOCATION: Large Classroom and Webinar

BOARD ATTENDANCE:

Dennis Holloway, Chairperson
Ronald Tillman, public member
Evonne Moore, Social Worker
Thad Ussery, public member
Paul Smart, Retired Engineer
Cassandra Byers, Behavioral Health

NON-BOARD ATTENDANCE:

Heather Horne, Health Director
Theresa Smith, Deputy Social Services Director
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director
Jacqueline Welch, Aging Services Director
Tammy Pearson, Child Support Director, Young Williams
Sheila Brosier, Administrative Assistant

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Dennis Holloway called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
- 2. INVOCATION:** Thad Ussery delivered the invocation for the meeting.
- 3. CONSENT AGENDA:** The appropriate number of board members was not present to establish a quorum.

MEETING MINUTES: The appropriate number of board members was not present to establish a quorum. Therefore, the minutes for the November 19, 2024 meeting will be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

- 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Heather Horne, Health Director, discussed the **Public Health Administrative Report**. The Health Department has seen an increase in walk-ins to our immunization clinic since we have been promoting this service. Walk-in Flu, RSV, Pneumonia and COVID vaccinations are available daily from 8:00am–5:00pm, Monday–Thursday and 8:00am–12:00noon on Fridays. The Health Department secured two billboard spaces on routes 1 and 74 to advertise immunization in English and Spanish.

The WIC Department is hosting a series of Breastfeeding Clinics each month to promote and support an integral part of infant growth. The clinic will include counseling for mothers, infant feeding choices, manuals and instructions on breastfeeding.

The Health Department sponsored Elizabeth Cook, a Richmond Community College healthcare management student, for three months. Ms. Cook rotated through each department, shadowed the Health Director, attended meetings, and completed several projects.

The Environmental Health staff were honored at the February Board of County Commissioners meeting for attaining national recognition for their accomplishments in following food safety standards by meeting all nine of the FDAs Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards and being the first county in North Carolina to do so. They were awarded the 2024 Samuel J. Crumrine Consumer Protection Award for Exemplary Strides in Food Safety at the Local Level by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

- B. Theresa Smith, Interim Social Services Director, discussed the **Social Services Administrative Report**. The CIP and LIEAP funds were expended and there are no more funds available for these programs.

Child Support collections are over 50% of the projected goal for the year and it is expected that collections will increase over the next few months. There are 96 children in foster care and currently three children are residing in the building temporarily. There are 239 children on the waiting list for day care placement.

- C. Jacqueline Welch, Aging Services Director, provided the **Aging Services Administrative Report**. Ms. Welch noted the waiting list for the congregate meal site has closed due to budget restraints; the waiting list for home delivered meals remains high due to budget restraints and lack of volunteer drivers to deliver meals. Two part time staff were hired and one volunteer delivers meals during his lunch break. Anyone interested in delivering meals should contact Ms. Welch. The In-Home Aide waiting list is high due to lack of staff; however, two applicants are being interviewed.

The Senior Center staff continue to do a phenomenal job of scheduling activities, special events, and field trips for our aging population. Wellness Wednesday Learning Series is held every fourth Wednesday at East Rockingham Senior Center, with a different topic related to Alzheimer's and Dementia.

Upcoming events include Veteran's Breakfast on March 27th from 9:00am–11:00am at the Cole Auditorium, sponsored by Sheriff Mark Gulledge. The event is free to veterans 55 years or older. A Health & Wellness Fair will be held on April 17th from 10:00am-2:00pm at East Rockingham Senior Center. During this event, bring a bag full of personal papers to be shredded and receive a raffle ticket for a chance to win a shredder at the Spring Fling Shred-A-Thon/Identity Theft Event from 11:00am-1:00pm. Discount haircuts will be offered at the East Rockingham Senior Center on Saturdays at 9:00am. All are welcome.

6. **OLD BUSINESS:** None.

7. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. CDC Communicable Disease Update – Heather Horne

Ms. Horne provided a Communicable Disease Update from the CDC via PowerPoint on the Measles, Whooping cough, and H5N1 Avian Influenza-Bird Flu.

Measles, medically known as Rubeola, is an airborne, infectious rash illness that is often spread where unvaccinated persons are in close quarters. Measles can live in the air for two hours after an infectious person leaves the space. Measles vaccine became available in 1963 and widespread use of the vaccine drastically reduced the disease rates. By 1981, the number of reported measles cases was 80% less compared with the previous year. In 2000, measles was officially eliminated from the United States. However, worldwide measles cases and outbreaks are on the rise again. As of March 6, 2025, a total of 222 measles cases and two deaths were reported by 12 states. The largest outbreak cases are in Texas. When more than 95% of people in a community are vaccinated most people are protected through community immunity (herd immunity). The more children who are unvaccinated in a school, the higher the chance of a measles outbreak within that school, and the larger that outbreak could be. Vaccination coverage among U.S. kindergartners has decreased from 95.2% during the 2019–2020 school year to 92.7% in the 2023–2024 school year, leaving approximately 280,000 kindergartners at risk during the 2023–2024 school year. The vaccination rate among children in North Carolina public schools is 95%.

Whooping cough, medically known as Pertussis, is a very contagious respiratory illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Bordetella pertussis*. This bacteria can spread easily from person to person through the air when a person with whooping cough sneezes or coughs, releasing small particles with bacteria in them. Other people can then breathe in the bacteria. Whooping cough may begin like a common cold, but unlike a cold, the coughing can last for weeks or months. Symptoms of whooping cough can vary for people based on their age and if they've been vaccinated or not. Treating whooping cough early with antibiotics may make the infection less serious. There has been a dramatic increase in cases in the U.S. and North Carolina due to the lack of vaccinations. The CDC recommends whooping cough vaccines are the best way to protect against whooping cough. The DTaP vaccine is recommended for young children 2 months to 6 years old; the Tdap is recommended for pre-teens, pregnant women and adults.

Avian Influenza (H5N1), also known as the bird flu, is widespread in wild birds worldwide and is causing outbreaks in poultry and U.S. dairy cows with several recent human cases in U.S. dairy and poultry workers. To date, there has been no evidence of human-to-human spread of H5N1 viruses in the United States. The likelihood of exposure

is higher among people in settings where infected birds or dairy cows have been identified, including occupational settings. The majority of confirmed human H5N1 cases in the United States since 2024 (67 of 70) were associated with exposure to infected animals, including poultry and dairy cows. While the current public health risk is low, CDC is watching the situation carefully and working with states to monitor people with animal exposures. There are current cases in Sampson and Hyde counties. The Health Department is working with the Department of Agriculture and NC Cooperative Extension to prepare for the event of an outbreak in Richmond County.

Many people are hesitant to get vaccinated, particularly younger people, due to social media influences and misinformation. The Health Department will continue to educate the public and offer vaccines.

B. Child Support Update – Tammy Pearson, Young Williams

Ms. Pearson introduced the Young Williams organization as a private vendor that delivers government services to agencies to streamline their processes and increase efficiency. She serves 17 counties and is the supervisor for Richmond County’s Child Support section. She travels to each county quarterly and visits Richmond County bi-weekly. The firm has hired three full time staff who are paired with mentors for training and one employee in the field office who handles cases. Their goals with Child Support are to improve performance and increase collections. In 2010, the state discontinued funding the Child Support Program and many states chose privatization, county or local funding. Richmond County is funding Young Williams through a contract with incentives and salary savings from vacant staff positions in Child Support.

8. INFORMAL DISCUSSION:

As Covid continues to resurface, Mr. Tillman inquired and recommended including guidance on Covid on the Health Department’s website.

Dennis Holloway mentioned keeping residents in western North Carolina in our thoughts and prayers as they proceed through the devastation in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

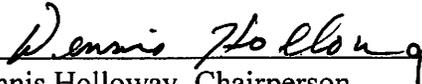
9. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held in person in the large classroom at the Health Department.

DATE: May 20, 2025

TIME: 7:00pm

LOCATION: Richmond County Health Department Large Classroom


Dennis Holloway, Chairperson
Health & Human Services Advisory Board


Heather Horne, Health Director
Richmond County Health Department