



RICHMOND COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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North Carolina
Public Health

Cheryl Speight, Interim Health Director
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director

Robby Hall, Acting Human Services Director
and Director of Social Services

RICHMOND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE: July 20, 2021
TIME: 7:00pm
LOCATION: Human Services Building large classroom and Webinar

BOARD ATTENDANCE:

Paul Smart, Chairperson
Bryan Land, County Manager
Aletha Lanier, Nurse
Thad Ussery, Public Member
Jon Marks, Pharmacist
Dr. John Stevenson, Retired Physician
Patricia Solomon, public member
Evonne Moore, Social Worker
Dr. Don Covington, Optometrist
Cassandra Byers, Daymark Center Director

NON-BOARD ATTENDANCE:

Robby Hall, Director of Social Services
Cheryl Speight, Interim Health Director
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director
Darcey Wiggins, Economics Supervisor
Sheila Brosier, Administrative Assistant

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Paul Smart called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. **INVOCATION:** Paul Smart delivered the invocation for the meeting.
3. **CONSENT AGENDA:** Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda.
 - **Motion Offered By:** Aletha Lanier
 - **Motion Seconded By:** Dr. Stevenson
 - **Motion Carried:** Yes

4. **MEETING MINUTES:** A motion to approve minutes from the March 16, 2021, meeting could not be offered at the last meeting because the quorum was not met in the number of board members present.

Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the March 16, 2021, meeting minutes.

- **Motion Offered By:** Thad Ussery
- **Motion Seconded By:** Aletha Lanier
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the May 18, 2021, meeting minutes.

- **Motion Offered By:** Jon Marks
- **Motion Seconded By:** Dr. Stevenson
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Interim Director Cheryl Speight addressed topics on the Public Health Administrative Report. Several staff changes have occurred with the retirement of the Health & Human Services Director. Cheryl Speight has been named Interim Health Director; Holly Haire is the Deputy Health Director; Robby Hall will serve as the Acting Human Services Director; and Allison Smith has been promoted to Clinical Supervisor to provide oversight of all clinical nurses.

Free COVID testing and free vaccinations continue to be offered at the Health Department; no appointment is necessary. Health department staff continue to offer vaccines at community events using the mobile truck. On Saturday, August 14th, staff will be at the Steve's Wings rally/march in Rockingham and Sunday, August 15th, staff will be at Dobbin Heights Community Center to administer COVID vaccines. It is important that children receive immunizations before school begins. Walk-in immunization clinics will be offered on July 22nd, August 12th and 26th, and September 2nd, 16th, and 20th. Appointments are required on all other days.

- B. Director Hall discussed the Social Services Administrative Report. Since the COVID pandemic began, DSS has seen an increase in abuse/neglect of children and an increase in foster care. Many relatives were unable to accommodate the children due to Covid; and the courts were closed which resulted in children not being moved into homes. DSS has increased the number of foster care and CPS staff.

Director Hall noted an increase in indigent burials and difficulty in finding open graves. The cemetery that donates gravesites to DSS is currently full. Dr. Stevenson noted Guilford County DSS asked several cemeteries to donate gravesites and suggested our DSS do the same.

Approximately 1/3 of the population in Richmond County are receiving some form of benefits through the CARES Act. Emergency benefits will be extended through October 2021. There has been a 28% increase in FNS benefits and 18% increase in Medicaid.

Director Hall discussed additional COVID assistance programs funded through grants, such as the HOPE Program and Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Program which assist residents with the payment of rent and utilities. He also discussed other programs, i.e., LIWAP (water assistance), LIEAP and CIP.

- C. Director Hall reported on the Aging Services Administrative Report in the absence of Jacqueline Welch. The senior centers reopened on July 7th with limitations on the number of seniors to accommodate in the buildings. The meal sites remain closed due to COVID and Aging Services has resumed home deliveries five days a week. Aging Services continues to assist seniors by offering activities, supplemental services and information. They received 20 new clients and assisted a total of 35 seniors in June with energy assistance, housing, Medicaid, fans, home health care, and home repairs.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Richmond County DSS Subsidized Child Care Local Policy

Director Hall reviewed the revision to the Subsidized Child Care Local Policy which includes the additional last sentence “Richmond County will not add to the 4% set aside for vulnerable populations.” He explained DSS is allotted a fixed amount of funds for Richmond County childcare. The policy prioritizes how the funds are allocated to cover children on the waiting list. There are currently 264 children on the waiting list for childcare. The sentence inclusion was mandated by the state and requires a vote for approval by the board.

This policy was presented at the last meeting; however, a motion to vote could not be offered at that time because the quorum was not met in the number of board members present. Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the Richmond County DSS Subsidized Child Care Local Policy.

- **Motion Offered By:** Dr. Stevenson
- **Motion Seconded By:** Jon Marks
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. COVID-19 Update:

Cheryl Speight provided an update on COVID-19 in Richmond County. Approximately 52,000+ Richmond County residents have been tested. To date, there are 47,774 negative cases; 5,032 positive cases of which 114 are active, 4,820 have recovered, and 98 have succumbed. It should be noted there are in-store and home test kits that are sold at various drug stores; these test results are not reported to the health department.

Because the number of COVID testing being performed was declining daily, testing was curtailed and offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. However, with the increase in COVID cases over the past few weeks, the demand for testing has increased. Beginning in August, the Health Department will resume COVID testing on Monday through Friday.

Testing

Covid positive cases are tracked by age, gender, and race. Statistics reveal the majority of positive cases are people between the ages of 51-64 years old; 54% are female and 46% are male; and 53% of positive cases are Caucasian, 34% are African Americans, 10% are Hispanic and 3% are classified as Other. To date, a total of 98 Covid related deaths are reported among Richmond County residents, with the majority of those over the age of 60. Statistics reveal 51% were female and 49% were male; 61% were Caucasian, 32% were African Americans, 2% were Hispanic, 2% were American Indians, and 3% were classified as other.

Vaccination

Approximately 15,462 Richmond County residents are fully vaccinated; of which 37 of them have tested positive and 3 of them were hospitalized since March 2021. 34% of the population are fully vaccinated while 37% of the population is partially vaccinated. The percentages are higher when we look at the number of residents who are eligible to be vaccinated (those over 12 years of age) compared to the entire population. Statistics reveal the majority of Richmond County residents that are fully vaccinated are age 75+, and the scale declines by age.

Free Covid vaccine is offered at the Health Department with no appointment required, and on average administer 20-25 vaccines per day. Health department staff continue to use the 911 mobile command center and set up mini clinics in neighborhoods and at events throughout Richmond County to educate residents, answer questions, and administer vaccination.

B. Energy Program Outreach Plan:

Darcey Wiggins, DSS Economics Supervisor, presented the Energy Programs Outreach Plan as a requirement to address the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which includes CIP, LIEAP, and Weatherization. Each county DSS is required to develop an Energy Program Outreach Plan to ensure residents are made aware of the assistance programs available to them. The Plan includes a committee comprised of various community partners that meet twice a year to plan how to advertise and implement the energy assistance programs. The plan also identifies organizational structure and best practices to implement the programs. To advertise the programs, DSS staff will disseminate flyers to the community, churches, and senior centers. Applications will be available in the front lobby of the DSS building and can be dropped off in the red mailbox. Beginning in December 2021, applications will be open for seniors and households with children under five years old; and in January 2022, applications will be open to everyone.

Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the Richmond County Energy Outreach Plan as presented.

- **Motion Offered By:** Dr. Stevenson
- **Motion Seconded By:** Aletha Lanier
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

C. Recommendation for Selection of Advisory Board Member:

There is one vacancy on the advisory board for a public member to replace Carolyn Walker. Mr. Smart encouraged everyone to recommend someone who is interested in serving on the board and forward the name(s) to Cheryl Speight.

9. INFORMAL DISCUSSION: Nothing to discuss.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

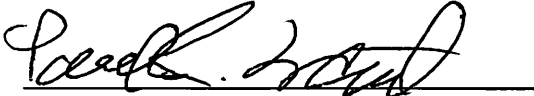
Paul Smart asked if there were any other matters to discuss to which no one responded. The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held via webinar and/or in person based on the status and any restrictions imposed due to the Covid pandemic.

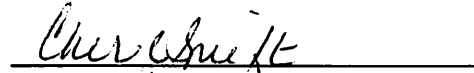
DATE: September 21, 2021

TIME: 7:00pm

LOCATION: To be determined.



Paul Smart, Chairperson
Health & Human Services Advisory Board



Cheryl Speight, Interim Health Director
Richmond County Health Department