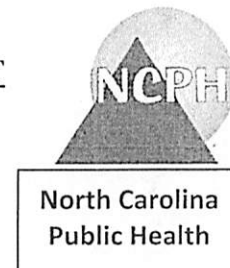




RICHMOND COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

127 Caroline Street
Rockingham, North Carolina 28379
Phone: 1-910-997-8300
Facsimile: 1-910-997-8336 Health Dept



Cheryl Speight, Health Director
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director

Robby Hall, Director of Social Services

RICHMOND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE: November 16, 2021
TIME: 7:00pm
LOCATION: Human Services Building large classroom and Webinar

BOARD ATTENDANCE:

In-Person:

Paul Smart, Chairperson
Thad Ussery, Public Member
Jon Marks, Pharmacist
Patricia Solomon, public member
Ronald Tillman, NC Department of Safety

Webinar:

Dr. John Stevenson, Retired Physician
Dr. Don Covington, Optometrist
Cassandra Byers, Daymark Center Director
Dr. Rick Watkins, County Commissioner
Dr. W. N. Cleveland, Vice-Chairperson

NON-BOARD ATTENDANCE:

Robby Hall, Director of Social Services
Cheryl Speight, Health Director
Holly Haire, Deputy Health Director
Jacqueline Welch, Aging Services Director
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:** Ronald Tillman
 - **Motion Seconded By:** Thad Ussery
 - **Motion Carried:** Yes

MEETING MINUTES: Paul Smart asked for a motion to approve the October 19, 2021, meeting minutes.

- **Motion Offered By:** Thad Ussery
- **Motion Seconded By:** Jon Marks
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Cheryl Speight, Health Director, discussed the Public Health Administrative Report. Free COVID-19 testing and COVID vaccinations continue to be offered at the health department. The FDA and CDC have authorized and recommend the Pfizer COVID-19 pediatric vaccine and it is now available at the health department. The health department offers Saturday clinics to administer vaccines to those who cannot come during the weekday. The next clinic is November 20th from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

FirstHealth Community Health is conducting a survey to learn what we can do to work in partnership with our community to improve the health and well-being of all individuals. The Community Health Survey is published on the health department webpage. Data from the survey will be used to prepare the Community Health Assessment.

The health department received the Advancing Equity Grant which is designed to examine and ensure equity is integrated into the health department's operations, practices, strategic plans, mission/vision statements, goals, and objectives. We are in the developmental phase and have coordinated a diverse cross-departmental team of staff to form a workgroup to assess the attitudes, practices, competencies, and structures of the agency that determine the need to address health inequities. The workgroup is expected to extend over a two year period.

- B. Robby Hall, Social Services Director, discussed the Social Services Administrative Report. Child Protective Services (CPS) is on target to meet its collection goal for fiscal year 2022. However, there is a notable decrease in collections compared to last year at this time, which can be attributed to COVID, unemployment and other socio-economic conditions.

Richmond County experienced an increase in drug use which can attribute to the number of substance affected infants born. Data continues to be reported each month and can be found on the DEFT webpage. Substance affected infants may lead to future needs for mental health services, special education, foster care and other services which Richmond County does not afford. There is a lack in foster care placement for children which has resulted in an increase in the occurrence of children temporarily residing overnight in the building. Alternative placement for children is hard to find and DSS is actively recruiting foster parents.

The County Commissioners approved the Proclamation for Adoption Awareness Month to be observed on November 20th. Plans are made to host an event on November 19th in its recognition.

- C. Jacqueline Welch, Aging Services Director, reported on the Aging Services Administrative Report. The Hamlet Senior Center reopened which allowed our meal site to reopen. Meal sites in East Rockingham and Ellerbe continue to serve hot meals to seniors five days a week for dine in or take out. Home delivered meals continue to be made weekly by our staff and volunteers.

Aging Services continues to receive donations from the community. An amazon shopping list was created for the community to make donations. Also, a “wish list” of items that can be donated is available on our webpage. For seniors with health problems who are living on a fixed income, these wish list items are especially appreciated and very much needed. We also receive donations for our Meals for Pets Program, which helps our clients that struggle with providing food for their pets.

Lirosia Wall and Sharon Morrison continue to assist seniors in applying for programs and services. They received 32 new clients in October and assisted them with a variety of programs, including energy assistance and home repairs/ramps. The “Cooking with Judy” show airs on Tuesdays on our Facebook page @agingisgood and has generated many views. Hosted by Judy Whitley and directed by Kim Hotter, the show composes a cooking video using recipes submitted from seniors. We are looking to collaborate with the Sandhills AGInnovation Center in Ellerbe to expand the program to design a meal which incorporates food boxes that come into the hub. This will provide the viewers the opportunity to learn more about the SAIC and how they can incorporate fresh healthy food into their daily diets.

Aging Services participated in the Downtown Spectacular event on October 29th and passed out candy, stickers, and agency information. Staff will pass out 100 turkeys to seniors on November 20th. In lieu of the annual Christmas party (due to COVID), approximately 1,300 fruit gift bags will be prepared and available for seniors to pick up at the Ellerbe and Rockingham senior centers in December. Local businesses are solicited to donate items for the bags. Businesses were invited to “Adopt a Senior for Christmas 2021” by placing a Christmas tree at their business with a tag that suggests the perfect gift for an older adult. Fundraising events include a mini yard sale at the Rockingham Senior Center daily; a yard sale on November 19th and 20th at the former Place of Grace on Airport Road in Rockingham; raffle tickets for a gift basket from Touch of Glo Spa & Tanning; and the RADA Cutlery fundraiser, of which 40% of the purchase price of cutlery goes to Aging Services. All the money raised goes towards Aging Services programs and activities.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Recommendation for Selection of Advisory Board Member:

The reinstatement of the following board members for a new term to run from January 2022 through January 2025 was approved at the last County Commissioners meeting.

Dr. William Cleveland
Evonne Moore
Patricia Solomon

Ralph Souder
Dr. Rick Watkins
Thad Ussery

Mr. Smart asked for nominations to fill one vacancy on the advisory board for a public member. Jacqueline Welch nominated Dennis Holloway. Ronald Tillman nominated Antonio Blue.

Dennis Holloway serves on the Aging Services Advisory Board and Lumber River COG board. He is an advocate for helping to rebuild in communities and has travelled to other states during disasters. He has agreed to serve on the board.

Antonio Blue is a former veteran and current mayor of Dobbin Heights. He is highly connected to the seniors in Dobbin Heights and citizens of Richmond County and is willing to serve in partnership with the Health and DSS departments. He has agreed to serve on the board.

Dr. Watkins noted that both nominees serve on state appointed committees or are elected officials and we need to see if there are limitations on how many boards they can serve on based on the regulations established by this board. Mr. Smart suggested to delay the nominations as we research our guidelines and determine if both candidates are eligible. Robby Hall indicated an eligibility form will be sent to both nominees to complete and return. Mr. Smart asked for a motion to table the nomination and revisit at the next meeting.

- **Motion Offered By:** Thad Ussery
- **Motion Seconded By:** Jon Marks
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. COVID-19 Update:

Cheryl Speight provided an update on COVID-19 in Richmond County. North Carolina state sends COVID data on a weekly basis and the health department webpage is updated every Wednesday. Vaccines for children between the ages of 5-11 is not reported by the state yet. Approximately 19,833 Richmond County residents have been vaccinated. To date, there are 7,289 positive COVID cases and 146 deaths. In the county, 4% of COVID testing results in positive cases per week.

Testing

Covid positive cases are tracked by age, gender, and race. Statistics reveal the majority of positive cases are people between the ages of 25-49 years old; 54% are female and 46% are male; and 49% of positive cases are Caucasian, 29% are African Americans, 1% are American Indian, and 21% are classified as Other; 11% are Hispanic. To date, a total of 146 Covid related deaths are reported among Richmond County residents, with the majority of those over the age of 60. Statistics reveal 39% were Caucasian, 18% were African Americans, 1% were American Indians and Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 5% were classified as other; 4% were Hispanic.

Free COVID testing is offered behind the health department on Monday-Friday from 8:00am to 6:00pm and at the Cole Auditorium from 10:00am to 6:00pm. PCR and rapid testing are available. The FDA has approved 63 home collection tests kits where samples

are collected at home and sent to a lab for results; and 13 at-home test kits where tests are performed at home with immediate results. It should be noted that the home test kit results are not reported to the health department; and therefore, are not included in the number of positive cases.

Vaccination

Approximately 52% of Richmond County population 12 years and older are fully vaccinated and 57% of the population has received at least one dose. Statistics reveal the majority of Richmond County residents that are fully vaccinated are age 65+, and the scale declines by age; 47% are female and 40% are male.

COVID-19 vaccines are available to everyone age 12 and older. The CDC has approved pediatric vaccines and 27 doses have been administered at the health department thus far. The third dose COVID vaccine is a full dose given to those with immunocompromised immune systems, while the booster is given to those with normal immune systems. All vaccines are administered at the health department on Monday–Thursday from 8:00am to 4:00pm and Fridays from 8:00am to 11:00am.

B. Update on LIHWAP, LIEAP, and RAP Programs

Robby Hall explained multiple assistance programs for rent and utilities that are available to the public.

LIHWAP – Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program

The LIHWAP provides assistance to Richmond County residents who have fallen behind in water bill payments. The program was scheduled to begin in October but has been moved to December 1st. Robby Hall discussed the data share agreement with each water company and it is expected the water companies will compile a list of past due accounts and forward to the state and county DSS. LIHWAP funds will be paid directly to the water companies in three categories. First, to those who have been disconnected; second, to those who received cut off notices, and lastly, to those whose accounts are past due. If there are any funds remaining in January, they will be offered to those in danger of their accounts being past due.

LIEAP – Low Income Energy Assistance Program

The LIEAP is a federally funded program that provides for a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills. Households must meet certain criteria to be eligible, such as an income test. Households including a person aged 60 or older or disabled persons receiving services through Aging Services or Adult Services can sign up for assistance beginning December 1, 2021. All other households can apply from January 1 through March 31, 2022, or until funds are exhausted.

RAP – Richmond Assistance Program

The RAP stems from the Community Development Block Grant to help curb housing evictions and utility disconnections. Richmond County was awarded \$810,000.00 to provide financial assistance to those families of low to moderate income who are behind on rent and utility costs. Households can apply by completing an application and dropping off in the red mailbox outside of the DSS entrance. If approved, emergency payments will be made directly to vendors or landlords. The maximum allotment per

household is \$1,000.00. The RAP began on September 1, 2021, and will continue until funds are exhausted.

8. **INFORMAL DISCUSSION:** Mr. Smart thanked the Health & Human Services for hosting the School of Government DSS Board training on today and tomorrow. The training is a five hour webinar spread over two days that will serve as an orientation for individuals who serve on social services governing boards.

Mr. Smart asked if there were any other matters to discuss to which no one responded.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Smart asked for a motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

- **Motion Offered By:** Ronald Tillman
- **Motion Seconded By:** Thad Ussery
- **Motion Carried:** Yes

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.

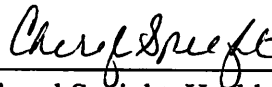
DATE: January 18, 2022

TIME: 7:00pm

LOCATION: Large Classroom and webinar



Paul Smart, Chairperson
Health & Human Services Advisory Board



Cheryl Speight, Health Director
Richmond County Health Department