

The Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board met on June 24, 2022 at 12:30 p.m. This was a virtual meeting.

- Health and Human Services Board Members: Lucy Lawrence Chairperson; Johnnie Grant, Vice-Chairperson; Amy Lenell, LeeAnne Tucker, Amanda Edwards, David Thompson, Greg Narron, Amadeo Valdez, Linda Weldon, Yvette Jives, Martha Salyers, Mona Elum, and Jacquelyn Hallum were in attendance.
- Health and Human Services staff: Stoney Blevins, Rebecca Smith, Phillip Hardin, Stacie Saunders, Stacey Wood, Lisa White, Kelli Buckner, and Christa Lance were in attendance.
- Dakisha Wesley, Assistant County Manager was in attendance.
- Brandon Freeman, County Attorney was in attendance.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

- Health and Human Services Board Chairperson, Lucy Lawrence called the meeting to order at 11:45.

#### **REVIEW AND ACTION OF BOARD AGENDA**

- The Board reviewed the July 22, 2022 meeting agenda. Board member Greg Narron motioned to accept the agenda as presented. Board member Amanda Edwards seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval. The agenda is attached and made a part of these minutes.
- The Chairperson asked if any Board member had any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matter coming before the Board and none were stated.

#### **REVIEW AND ACTION OF BOARD MINUTES**

- The Board reviewed the June 24, 2022 minutes. Board member Martha Salyers motioned to accept the minutes as presented. Board member LeeAnne Tucker seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval. The Board minutes are attached and made a part of these minutes.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **SUNSET OF NC PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY/MEETING FORMAT**

- In Stoney's absence County Attorney Brandon Freeman gave an overview of what this means. He said that for next months meeting, it will be in person and online meeting. The Executive Committee will meet and make decisions and this decision will be sent to the Board before the August meeting.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **ENERGY OUTREACH PLAN**

- Phillip Hardin presented the annual Energy Outreach Plan to the Board as it needs to be approved by the HHS Board each year. The plan this year doesn't differ much from previous years plan except for improved communication strategies. The emphasis to improve our communication for the Energy Program has grown from the Board pushing the agency to do a better job in getting the word out about the programs administered by Economic Services and it is much appreciated. The plan used the Beacon Group (Buncombe Emergency Assistance Coordinating Network) again this year as the sounding board for writing the plan. This is a network of over 40 community organizations that meet bi-monthly to coordinate services across the county. This group always provides valuable feedback in crafting the plan. The Energy Program will again be administered by Eblen Charities as they have done for the past 15 years. We will use county and HHS communications staff to help Eblen make material available about the Energy Program, as we have done in the past couple of years. This has really helped in getting the word out. We also will do robo calls again to all residents who are receiving any benefits through Economic Service advising them to apply for Energy Assistance. Mr. Hardin stated that he didn't have the data this year that the Board always looks for as Economic Services has recently lost their Strategy and Innovation data person but he would work on seeing if he could get someone else who might be able to pull the data. Chairperson Lucy Lawrence asked for the motion to pass the Energy Outreach Plan. David Thompson motioned that the Energy Outreach Plan be accepted as presented. Leah Anne Tucker seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous

in approval. The Executive Committee will draft a letter to local delegation concerning increasing the payment for LIEAP recipients. Once drafted it will be brought back to the Board.

#### **ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR/VICE CHAIR FOR SF 23**

- Lucy Lawrence opened the floor for nominations of Chair. Linda Weldon nominated Lucy Lawrence as Chair, Martha Salyers seconded the nomination. Brandon Freeman asked if there were any other nominations, hearing none the floor was closed and Brandon Freeman, County Attorney asked Christa Lance to take a roll call vote. Lucy was unanimously voted in as Chair for another year.
- Lucy Lawrence opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Greg Narron nominated Johnnie Grant for Vice Chair, Martha Salyers seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. The floor was closed and Christa Lance did roll call for the vote. Johnnie Grant was unanimously elected as Vice Chair for another year.

#### **ANNUAL REVIEW/UPDATES TO BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

- The wrong Operating Procedures were sent out so this will be tabled until the August meeting.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH/COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGIES FOR GUN SAFETY**

- Rebecca Smith discussed what her committee discussed about gun safety. The PowerPoint is attached and made a part of these minutes.
- Saunders stated that she had pulled national, state, and local data to help inform the discussion as well as put together a few “level-setting” slides on Public Health approach to aid in the committee’s discussion about what action a board may take. Saunders shared the CDC US Mapping tool ([https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm\\_mortality/firearm.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm)) and with the corresponding firearm mortality table for members review. Saunders stated that as of 2020 data, NC experienced 1699 firearm deaths (all types) ranking the state 8<sup>th</sup> in absolute number of deaths and the state had a death rate of 16 per 100000 in that year (21<sup>st</sup> in rank). Additionally, Saunders shared the NC DHHS Injury & Violence Prevention [Dashboard](#) that provides state and county level data on various metric including homicide, suicide and firearm deaths. This data is available in 1 year, 5 year and 10 year trends but is a bit more dated than the CDC mapping tools; the most current year is 2019. Lastly, Saunders shared the NC Detect quarterly reports on firearm injuries. Saunders stated that these reports are available up to December 2021 and utilize hospital data to understand firearm injury (<https://ncdetect.org/nc-faster-firearm-quarterly-reports/>). This report lists the counties with the highest annual firearm related injury, Buncombe is not listed as a high county nor were any other WNC counties as of most current report. At this time, Saunders provided an overview of the Public Health approach to assessing and evaluating health and social issues (See slides attached). This includes first define the problem and understanding the magnitude typically through data, identifying the protective and risk factors associated with the problem, developing strategies to address the issue, and scaling those strategies with good evidence of improvement across systems and jurisdictions. Saunders also shared that strategies can vary in scale as to their intended reach and impact from those that aim to change or improve social drivers of health racism and inequities to focus on education for individual health behavior change. Lastly, Saunders shared that when thinking about what a board could advocate or recommend regarding Gun Safety, comparisons are drawn to the public health approach that was taken to reduce the number of motor vehicle injuries and deaths. Saunders shared a comparison of those strategies to similar or like strategies for gun safety and violence. These strategies may be items for which a Board might recommend local, state or federal funding or policy change to appropriate elected officials.
- Phillip Hardin presented for the Economic Benefits and Opportunities Committee. They reiterated what had already been presented by the previous two committees and had talked about some of the same things. A couple of things that had been mentioned was the need to make sure that we are training staff to be aware of gun violence and to have the tools to deal with situations that may arise. There may also be a need to help provide training to other community organizations. The committee also thought it might be a good idea to put messaging about gun violence on all of the communications that HHS puts out. We also believe that education

is the number one tool in trying to fight this epidemic. This education also needs to start in the schools, maybe through existing curriculum. It was good to hear the schools are already moving forward with some of these things. Also wondered if the business community can get involved. All in all members realized this is a community problem and will take many organizations in the community to solve.

#### **DIRECTORS REPORT**

- Stacie Saunders provided information to the HHS Board regarding the global and national Monkeypox outbreak. Saunders shared that Buncombe County identified its first case of Monkeypox on July 21, 2022. Saunders shared the individual is isolating; contact tracing has taken place, staff has been connecting contacts to vaccine, and no other information about the case will be shared. Saunders also reported that while ANYONE can get Monkeypox, this particular outbreak is disproportionately impacting our MSM (men who have sex with men) and transgender neighbors at this time. Saunders then explained that BC HHS Public Health initiated Incident Command for this event prior to having a first case and provided an overview of the operational arms including testing, vaccine and messaging. Saunders stated that BC HHS Public Health is serving as a vaccine hub for WNC which means Public Health is providing vaccine in the clinic and transferring vaccine to other local health departments and providers in the region. Buncombe has received 3 shipments totaling about 520 doses, transferred about 140 doses to other providers in the region including WNCCHS, and BCHHS has administered over 60 1st doses in the 40 Coxe location. Additional shipments are anticipated and all received so far has been JYNNEOS. Because of the limited supply, individual need to meet eligibility criteria to receive vaccine. Right now, this means, ANYONE who has been exposed to someone with monkeypox or men who have sex with men or transgender who have multiple of anonymous partners in the last 14 days can get vaccine due to the significant impact on this group in this outbreak. If an individual meets any of those criteria regardless of county of residence, they can visit us BC Health and Human Service M-F or visit their home local health department or WNCCHS. Saunders addressed stigma concerns underscoring that anyone can get Monkeypox, this is known through the disease's history in endemic countries and in previous US outbreaks. Saunders stated that currently, the outbreak is heavily impacting MSM and transgender neighbors and that messaging is important because of potential for stigmatization and equally important to get the word out to those most impacted at this time. BC HHS Communications has been working with Public Health to provide accurate information using traditional media, social media and informal network of communications. In addition, the newly formed Mobile Team is at work connecting with local partners and community organizations to identify events or other opportunities in the area or region where we can provide outreach. No questions were asked by the Board.

#### **CHAIRPERSONS REPORT**

- The Board Commitment letters and Program Committee assignment choices were sent again by email today.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Chairperson Lucy Lawrence informed the Board that she would entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board member Jacquelyn Hallum motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 1:20pm. Board member Johnnie Grant seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in approval.

Minutes read and approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

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Lucy Lawrence  
Health and Human Services  
Board Chairperson

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Stoney Blevins  
Executive Secretary to the Board