Chatham County Board of Social Services
Meeting Minute Notes
April 19, 2018

In Attendance: Richard Edwards, Chair; Pam Johnson, Vice Chair; Carl Thompson, Member; Thomas Droke, Member; Loyda Estrada, Member and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Richard Edwards called the meeting to order. Thomas Droke motioned to approve the April, 2018 meeting minutes with a second by Pam Johnson. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Items Discussed:

Economic Services Updates

March timeliness:

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Applications: 99.24% (standard is 95%)

FNS Recertifications: 95.8% (standard is 95%)

Medicaid applications: 94% overall (standard is 90%).

During the last quarter, 100 reviews were done for accuracy of Medicaid cases. There were 23 identified errors in those reviews. There were 0 errors in issuing a benefit that someone was not eligible for. In 2 cases a person was denied incorrectly and these have been addressed. Most of the errors were in saving and documenting the proper notices and verifications in the system. The Medicaid supervisors are working with their caseworkers to improve these. In Family and Children’s Medicaid, position vacancies and turnover are likely a contributing factor as caseworkers are covering extra work. Two caseworkers recently completed almost six months of training with the supervisor and one of these caseworkers resigned this week. An additional caseworker position has been included in the recommended budget. The position could be filled in October. It is included in contingency which means we will only fill the position if it is needed. Given the vacancy issues, it is unclear if the position is actually needed since this program has not been fully staffed this fiscal year.

The Childcare spending coefficient for March is unknown at this time.
Donna Gigowski has joined Chatham County DSS as the new Food and Nutrition Services supervisor. She was previously the FNS supervisor in Moore County. In addition to the FNS program, she will supervise Employment and Training and also Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation.

Eighteen referrals have been made so far in our new Employment and Training Program. We are meeting weekly with CCCC to work through the details of implementation.

Both Sara Welch and Jennie Kristiansen have participated in preparations for Medicaid transformation statewide. Three other counties are currently participating in this work. Debra Farrington, Senior Program Manager and the Division of Health Benefits came to Chatham County to talk with Sara regarding the Medicaid program and potential impacts when Medicaid Transformation begins. The required waiver for Medicaid Transformation has not yet been approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) but it is anticipated that it will be approved soon. As a part of this transformation, all Medicaid beneficiaries will select a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP). There will be Enrollment Brokers (EB) available to help with the selection. Some medical providers may be enrolled in more than one PHP. Phase I begins in February 2019 and will primarily include people enrolled in the Family and Children’s Medicaid Program. The contract for the Enrollment Brokers has not yet been awarded but it is anticipated that it will be done in May 2018 and so it is not clear how EB’s will be integrated into the existing eligibility process. While the economic services caseworker will not be responsible for educating clients regarding the various PHP’s it is anticipated that clients may come/call DSS for guidance. The caseworker may be responsible for asking the client which PHP they would like to enroll in and then referring the client to an EB if the client has questions. It will be required that EB are available in person (although not necessarily stationed in every county), by phone, and by computer. In the workgroup, several options were discussed regarding ensuring easy access to EB.

**Family Services Updates**

**Children’s Services:** Children’s services began taking Child Protective Services Reports in NCFAST on March 26th. All new accepted reports that are transferred to either in-home services or foster care will be completed in NCFAST. The existing foster care cases will convert in late April. Conversion (and particularly the financial piece of conversion with board rates and IV-E eligibility) has been where most of the pilot counties faced more significant problems. Since beginning in NCFAST, we have filed for custody of a large sibling set, however, none of those children are placed in a placement where a payment is being issued by the county and so we have not yet tested the financial capabilities in NCFAST. While the volume of new CPS reports has not been overwhelming, we are still working through problems, tweaking internal processes, and facing a number of training challenges. Child welfare supervisors are also participating in two days of policy training this week. New child welfare policies will be implemented in July 2018. These policy changes are separate from NCFAST and a part of the Program Improvement Plan required by the Children’s Bureau.

The Stage One Report from the Social Services Working Group was issued. Jennie will email a link to a blog post from Aimee Wall at the UNC School of Government that includes a summary and link to the report. The report covers considerations regarding regionalization, involvement of
local elected officials, and other recommendations (e.g. consistency and accountability of regional offices, location, and legal representation).

On April 10th DSS organized a “Wear Blue Day” for Prevent Child Abuse Month. Employees also planted two pinwheel gardens at DSS and at the Performance Building (where Greek Kouzina is located). A total of 377 pinwheels were planted to represent the 248 abuse and neglect assessments/investigations that took place in 2017 and the 129 children who were in foster care. Jennie is working with Debra Henzey at the Manager’s Office to issue a press release that should come out later this week.

**Adult Services:** Renae Minor (adult services supervisor) and John Cradle (adult services social worker) have both participated in the development of the Aging Strategic Plan. DSS will play a role in supporting Caregiving and Care Services and also Social Connectedness and Community Engagement. This will likely include identifying and promoting electronic caregiver support videos, preparing of first responders who interact with socially isolated individuals, and assessing the extent to which social isolation is a problem and how it can better be addressed within the community. Other partners include First Health (EMS), Daymark, Sherriff’s Office, Health Alliance, PACE, and the library.

Fearrington Cares recently sponsored a toiletry supply drive for Adult Services. Six bags of supplies were delivered this week to provide to elderly and disabled clients!

There was a motion to adjourn from Carl Thompson and a second motion from Thomas Droke.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at 3:00 pm in the DSS Board Conference Room.

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Chair                      Date

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Secretary                  Date