

are Henderson County Board of Social Services

November, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Josh Simpson at 12:02 pm.

Board Members Present	Josh Simpson, Member Melinda Lowrance, Member Judy Smith, Member Stephen Gwaltney, Member Rebecca McCall, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Lorie Horne, Social Work Program Administrator Joseph Maxey Jr., Administrative Officer Debby Freeman, Economic Services Program Administrator Deborah Johnson, Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk Amber Buchanan, Program Manager
Guest	None

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

D. Approval of Minutes

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, regular meeting, there were none. Mrs. Smith moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Gwaltney seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Board Education

HIPP (Health Insurance Premium Payment)

Amber Buchanan presented to the Board a lesser-known program available to qualifying applicants, HIPP. A program sponsored by North Carolina's Division of Medical Assistance. This program provides payment reimbursements to Medicaid families for the cost of their employer sponsored insurance (ESI). ESI may be available through an employer or a COBRA plan. This provides the opportunity for Medicaid recipients to have both Medicaid and commercial health insurance at no cost.

**Requirements**

At least one family member must:

- Be a Medicaid recipient in North Carolina
- Have access to employer-sponsored insurance or COBRA benefits through previous employer.

Meeting these requirements does not automatically qualify a family/client for this program. The State reviews all applications and will determine if it is cost-effective to pay for the health insurance coverage.

### **Multiple Benefits**

This program offers an opportunity for families to enroll in employer-sponsored insurance at no cost to them which increases the access they have to quality healthcare.

The State also benefits from this program. Once enrolled in this program, most of the medical costs Medicaid would typically cover are transferred to the health insurance policy, leaving the cost of the policy for Medicaid to cover.

Costs are essentially reduced for our families and the State.

### **How to Apply**

Medicaid recipients can request assistance from their Medicaid caseworker.

Online and paper application can be found at [www.mynchipp.com](http://www.mynchipp.com)

Information needed to complete the application:

- Policy Holder's SSN
- Policy Number & Group Number
- Employer & Employee share of premium cost
- Medicaid recipient(s) name and Medicaid ID number

The following can be provided for faster processing:

- Insurance Card
- Summary of benefits
- Employer health insurance rate sheet
- Paystub

## **F. Reports**

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

The Health Emergency has been extended again. Federal officials did not send the anticipated 60-day notice of the end of the federal COVID-19 PHE over the weekend. Here are key dates based on the non-announcement – recognizing that Congressional legislative action could affect any of these:

- We assume the PHE will be renewed effective January 11, 2023, and last for a full 90 days.

- We assume the administration will maintain its commitment to provide 60 days' advance notice before ending the PHE. If this new PHE is the last PHE, the 60-day threshold would come on February 10, 2023.
- The new assumed end date of the PHE would be April 11, 2023.
- An April end of PHE means that the Medicaid continuous enrollment requirement would expire on April 30, 2023.

Recruitment tools were sent by the State to recruit new applicants. Materials can be used at job fairs to attract new workers. During the pandemic, the number of applicants has reduced. Ethan Rhodes, our new county recruiter is trying to reach people in new ways. Other county Directors are also having issues filling positions.

Mr. Simpson asked if we had any additional benefits we could offer applicants. Director McFalls stated that our benefits are much better than surrounding counties. The health insurance benefits we offer are less expensive and better than surrounding counties in WNC, much better than the school system and state insurance. We offer Education Reimbursement, Wellness Clinic, and have three different schedules to offer. Karen Ensley, the county Human Resources Director, is working to improve interest in job openings.

Mr. Simpson asked why WIC increased so much in our county? Director McFalls stated she believes that when the school system shut down during the pandemic, parents that historically worked had to leave jobs to care for their children at home. That increased WIC applications because employers could not accommodate schedules for parents to be at home. More parents became eligible for WIC because they were no longer employed. Henderson County was one of a few counties that stayed open through the pandemic and that also increased the amount of applications that were submitted. Not all DSS offices in the state stayed open during the pandemic as Henderson County did.

Mr. Simpson asked how much of Governor Cooper's grant funds went to Henderson County. Director McFalls will investigate to get an answer.

Mr. Simpson asked if we had any follow up from last month when our systems were down. Director McFalls stated that the state said we would be held harmless during that time.

#### **October Employees of the Month (Attachment II)**

#### **September 2021 – September 2022 Statistical Report (Attachment III)**

#### **October Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)**

Six children came into custody, and eight children reached permanence. We have had more parents be able to reunite with their children. The goal is to reunite children with their parents and families.

In October, we had sixty-two foster homes and that equates to one hundred eight slots. We had one hundred forty in foster care. Many of the children in foster care are under the age of five.

**Financial Report October 2022 (Attachment V)**

Not available at this time. Report will be given out in December.

G. Old Business

**DSS staffing update**

Director McFalls stated DSS currently has fifteen vacancies. Six of the vacancies are in Social Work. Eight vacancies are in Economic Services, and one child support worker.

We currently have some positions with applicants scheduled to begin in December.

H. New Business


**Toy Run**

The Toy Run is Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. It is our big event for our foster children. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Donations and toys are both appreciated. We ask the children what their interests are and try to fill their wishes. This is a large undertaking and community partners help with the distribution of toys.

I. Adjournment

Mr. Simpson asked if there were any additional items for discussion. There were none presented. Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

 12/20/22  
Josh Simpson, Chair Date

  
Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – November 2022
- II. November Employees of the Month
- III. October 2021 – October 2022 Statistical Report
- IV. Program Administrator's Report – November 2022
- V. Toy Run Flyer
- VI. NC Legislators: Medicaid Expansion