

Walter B. Jones ADATC Center
Greenville, NC

50th Anniversary Event

June 19, 2019

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
**Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities,
Kody Kinsley**

(Remarks as Prepared)

Introduction

- Good morning! Thank you for being here! I'm glad to be here today.
- It is my honor to serve as the Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.
- The best part of my job is being in the community – where our work happens in direct service to people. I have the honor of calling everyone here at the Walter B. Jones Center my colleague.
- I promise you – Secretary Cohen would much rather be here with us today, on this joyous occasion, than in Raleigh. But her leadership is needed there, and she sends her heartfelt regrets.
- She is sad to be missing the festivities today and is thankful for all of you.
- If she were here, you know the first thing she would talk about is our values. And when I think about the history and work of the Walter B. Jones center and all those gathered here today, it's easy to immediately see all of the DHHS values realized:
 - People-Focused
 - Teamwork
 - Transparency
 - Stewardship
 - Proactive Communication
 - Joy
- I suspect on that last one – we're all going to do just fine with that value today!
- These values bind us together. In good times and bad, they guide our choices. It shapes our culture as one DHHS team, and ensures we approach everything we do with the right spirit.
- Instilling such a high-performing culture, so clearly dedicated to those we serve, starts with leadership. And for that, I'm so grateful to have Walter B. Jones' Director, Ben Gregory, as the leader.
- And I want everyone here to know that Ben has a reputation in Raleigh. <pause>
- And it's that he is going to tell it like it is – no matter what. And no matter who he's talking to. We're going to get the brass tax from Ben. And because he does it with his heart in the right place, and with obvious commitment to our goals and values, for that #Transparency – I am truly grateful.
- Ben would of course attribute the successes of WBJ to his entire team, and in particular his Clinical Director, Sonya Longest.
- Please join me in giving a round of applause for Ben, Sonya, and the entire WBJ team. I'm thankful for their work and leadership.

- I also want to pause and recognize the family members of our namesake who are here with us today.

History

- I am thrilled to be here today to help mark a notable moment in the life of this organization and celebrate 50 years of dedicated service to Eastern North Carolina.
- At moments like these, I think it's important to reflect on that service and how it's evolved over time.
- Alcohol and drug abuse treatment centers, by their very nature and mission, provide critical services to ensure that North Carolina residents have access to substance use disorder treatment.
- The Walter B. Jones Center was founded as an Alcohol Rehab Center in 1969, which was a "28 Day" program offering detox, education, recreation, vocational rehabilitation, group therapy and AA groups.
- Over time, the name changed, from an Alcohol Rehab Center to an Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center, or ADATC. With this, the mission was expanded to better fit the needs of North Carolinians, by adding services like the acute care unit. This added capacity to treat individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders and alleviated the burden on the emergency departments and state psychiatric hospitals.
- Recently, there has been a need to innovate further. This prompted the creation of the Lakeside Psychiatric Hospital and Woodside Treatment Center, both under the Walter B. Jones Umbrella organization.
- It's this modern iteration of the Walter B. Jones Center that we celebrate today. And the history of this center is a clear indication that my colleagues are embracing the charge to constantly innovate, to implement evidence-based practices and build treatment programs that meet the complex needs of North Carolinians today.
- Substance use disorder treatment is modernizing rapidly. Our challenge across the state is to constantly stay on the leading edge of that evidence and ensure our practices are offering the best hope for care for those we serve.
- Ensuring our treatment works means starting with the facts:
- In NC, over 500,000 are living with a Substance Use Disorder – which means no family is untouched by this.
- It has become clear, through numerous studies, that Substance Use Disorder is a disease – much like diabetes or high blood pressure.
- Clinicians, providers, and researchers are still working to understand the contributing factors of this disease. We know early exposure, and traumatic events in childhood directly contribute to the disease.
- What we know for sure is that Substance Use Disorder is NOT a moral failing or a failure of strength. The disease is real. And penalizing individuals and their families when someone struggles with a disease is heartless and wrong.
- Treating SUD like a disease means several things:
- First and foremost, fighting stigma. We envision a society where no one feels shame for their illness and where access to care is uninhibited.
- It also means implementing evidence-based practices. And ensuring our investment in care gives real outcomes and not false hope.
- It also means we work to tackle the contributing factors of the disease. And treat the whole person.

- The Department of Health and Human Services is committed to this ambitious vision for Substance Use Disorder in our state. And the work of Walter B. Jones is leading the way.

Opioid Treatment Program

- In the midst of the current opioid epidemic in North Carolina, a primary focus for WBJ is expanding services once again to provide both inpatient and outpatient treatment services for opioid addiction.
- Medication Assisted Treatment is the Evidence-Based, Gold-Standard of Care for Opioid and Heroin Use Disorder. It works. Recovery Happens. People Thrive. And they return to their lives, families, and work.
- North Carolina has been hit hard by the epidemic. Five North Carolinians die every day from a drug overdose.
- As many of you know, combatting the opioid epidemic is one of our primary Department priorities.
- We envision a healthier North Carolina that provides unfettered access to treatment for those struggling with substance use disorder and systems of care that provide access to the supports that drive health.
- There has been a lot of important progress recently in combatting the opioid epidemic. Substance Use Disorder is a chronic disease. Treatment Works. And people recover.
- The Walter B. Jones Center along with R.J. Blackley and Julian F. Keith ADATCs, have all played vital roles in addressing substance dependency issues facing North Carolina residents. Walter B. Jones Center became an inpatient Opioid Treatment Program in 2012.
- Over the last seven years the OTP at WBJ has provided inpatient opioid treatment services to hundreds of North Carolina citizens, in conjunction with outpatient North Carolina OTPs.
- The next step in providing unfettered access to treatment is the plan to open an outpatient Opioid Treatment Program here, at the Walter B. Jones Center in the next few months. Of course, this means finding new staff to open the new outpatient program. But those efforts are underway and I'm excited at the prospect.
- This not only demonstrates the Center's continued valuable role and function in the spectrum of care, this further highlights their capacity to evolve to meet the needs of the state over time.
- Additionally, each of the ADATCs have started offering Medication Assisted Treatment, or MAT.
- Again. MAT is the GOLD STANDARD OF CARE for opioid and heroin use disorder.
- There is still a LOT of misinformation about MAT in our communities. You've heard it: "Why should I just replace one drug with another?" We know this evidence-based approach works though.
- Again. STIGMA kills. And fake news about effective treatment is stigma run-a-muck. MAT is effective. The evidence is clear.
- Addiction is a chronic disease, and requires long-term, stable support. We must build a sustainable infrastructure that meets the scale of the problem. Our ADATCs like Walter B. Jones, and their Opioid Treatment Program are part of that infrastructure.
- Thank you for being part of the solution.

DHHS Mission and Values

- This work fits in with DHHS' mission to provide essential services through collaboration with our partners to improve the health, safety and well-being of all North Carolinians. We are focused on providing inpatient substance use treatment services to the most vulnerable NC residents.
- The care and treatment the WBJ staff provide are evidence of each of the Department's values:
 - As seen through 50 years of service, Walter B. Jones Center is a **people-focused** facility that has evolved along with the vision to expand on the current services.
 - The development of Lakeside and Woodside is possible because of the powerful **communication and teamwork**.
 - The process of working with CMS and the Joint Commission to establish Woodside and Lakeside required **transparency** to maintain the integrity of critical safety net services.
 - In identifying the most needed critical services over the course of the past 50 years, the Center has consistently been a good **steward of state resources**, strengthening existing relationships and building new partnerships to maintain the role as a staple in Eastern North Carolina.
 - And again, **Joy at Work** has been a central focus of the staff at Walter B. Jones as they take great pride in the facility, the individuals served and their local community.

Medicaid Transformation

- The last thing I want to mention is that we are now in the process of implementing Medicaid Transformation, which will integrate physical and behavioral health in North Carolina.
- No longer will our state's policies and programs separate the body from the mind in how we approach health care.
- Walter B. Jones and our other treatment centers will play an important role in this as we model the kind of approach that will bring us closer to enabling whole person health as opposed to simply putting resources toward uncoordinated healthcare.

Conclusion

- While I'm so proud and grateful for the good work that is taking place here at Walter B. Jones – and has for five decades – there is lots of work left to do. We are in this together. We couldn't do it without your hard work every day.
- Thank you again for having me here today.