



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Division of Social Services
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEV DUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

CARLA WEST • Division Director, Human Services

DREW PLEDGER • Chairman, Social Services Commission

Meeting Minutes
Social Services Commission Quarterly Meeting
March 12, 2025

I. Call to Order

1. Chairman Pledger called the Social Services quarterly meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Meeting was in person and virtual using Go-To-Webinar.
2. Chairman Pledger read the ethic statement/conflicts of interest statement; being that there were none, Danielle Upchurch proceeded to call the roll.
3. Social Services Commission roll call:
 - a. **Commissioners in attendance and constituting a quorum were:** Chairman Drew Pledger, Brandie Walser, Jeanne Lindquist, Dr. Tia Crooms, Margie Christopher, Willa Wyatt, Tanisha James, Robert Simmons, Rebecca Andrews, Wixie Stephens, Kelsey Crowe and Cindy Locklear, Ernestine Taylor, Samantha Branch
 - b. **Commissioners absent:**
 - c. **DHHS Staff Present:** Paris Penny (DSS), Danielle Upchurch (DSS), Carla West (DSS), David Lee (DSS), Ben Rose (DSS), Tracy Turner (DSS), Misty Piekaar-McWilliams (DAS), and Jay Pontier (NC FAST)
 - d. **DOJ Staff Present:** Tom Campbell and Colleen Crowley
 - e. **Others:** Charles Lycette, Dare County Health and Human Services Director; Chris Weatherford, Director, Jackson County Department of Social Services
4. Chairman Drew Pledger provided introductions and opening remarks.
5. Motion by Commissioner Robert Simmons to move and approve the meeting minutes from December 11, 2024. Motion seconded by Commissioner Rebecca Andrews and carried without dissent.

II. New Business

Rules 10A NCAC 97 update about Rules Review Commission approval provided by Misty Piekaar-McWilliams. She informed Commissioners that the Rules Review Commission approved the initial determination of rules belonging to Office of Economic Opportunity located in subchapter 97 of 10A NCAC. The Social Services Commission voted on these determinations in its December 2024 quarterly meeting. She did not request of the Social Services Commission to make a motion at this time.

Rules 10A NCAC 06 (U,V,W, and X) Adult Day Services, State In Home Fund update about the public comment period provided by Misty Piekaar-McWilliams. She informed

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LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

MAILING ADDRESS: 2401 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2401

www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-855-6335 • FAX: 919-334-1018

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Commissioners that the comment period ended for rules belonging to Division of Aging located in subchapter 06 of 10A NCAC. She requested of the Social Services Commission to make a motion to submit the rules belonging to the Division of Aging to the Rules Review Commission. Motion to submit the rules to the Rules Review Commission as requested by Commissioner Simmons and seconded by Jeanne Lindquist and carried without dissent.

Rules 10A NCAC 10, 70A, 70B, 70C, 70E, 70G, 70H, 70J and 70L update provided by Misty Piekaar-McWilliams. She informed Commissioners that the Rules Review Commission had notified Paris Penny and herself that these rules would need initial determinations approved by the Social Services Commission made within one (1) year. Ms. Piekaar-McWilliams stated that no action item was required on part of the Social Services Commission at this time but wanted to keep the Commission informed that these rules would be next before the Social Services Commission for initial determinations.

Appointment to Hyde County Board of Social Services to fill a partial term that was vacated.

a. Congressional District 3:

- i. Motion by Commissioner Pledger to move to appoint Earl Dawson Pugh to Hyde County Department of Social Services Board. Motion seconded by Commissioner Robert Simmons and carried without dissent.

III. Presentations

Regional Support Model update was provided by Lead Regional Director, Ben Rose. Mr. Rose presented in December and enjoyed interacting with the Commission. Mr. Rose discussed what is happening in the regional support models. Mr. Rose provided a brief update on some of the things that occurred in January at the planning retreat and setting forth goals and objectives. Mr. Rose said the regional directors are focused on continuous quality improvement and trying to incorporate that model that is the State model for helping support the best outcomes. Regional directors are focused on new county DSS directors. This includes developing a resource manual and training curriculum. The objective is for new directors to have all the tools necessary for success. This will help them get oriented, trained, and understand the data that they need to be looking at, understand the critical issues they need to be focused on, and help them in any way, provide guidance, technical assistance. The regional directors are conducting regional meetings now with the county DSS. They have extended some invitations to Social Service Commission members and you may be, as a commission member, getting an invitation to a future meeting. Regional directors have been involved in intensive technical assistance with counties. One of the long-term goals is to be proactive, get upstream and help counties identify issues early, try to address issues early. Some regional directors are calling the LMEs to advocate for certain situations or advocating back to the state. One thing that we're seeing that the workforce issue is real, it's real at the state, it's real in the counties. Regional directors are meeting bi-monthly with

Healthy Blue on the Child and Family Specialty Plan. This is for special Medicaid coverage plan for children in foster care and then families eventually in child welfare.

Mr. Rose said regional directors work in conjunction with the program consultants there to help address counties and get resources for that. The directors will call regional directors to say, hey, I've got this child and we use the rapid response system. A question was raised about children in offices when cannot find a placement. Mr. Rose reported this was still a challenge. It's gotten maybe a little better, but it's still a challenge, and that's due to lack of services all the time, especially in certain areas like rural areas. There have been children in agencies for as long as three or four months. The CFSP should help with that. Commissioner Andrews reported this morning WakeMed likely had about a hundred patients in the emergency department awaiting a bed because the hospital is filled with people that need some other type of case. Commissioner Lindquist reported about one in Charlotte and they're charging the \$1,800 a day. A question was raised about if the LME doesn't have a place for this child to go, what do you do? If they go to a hospital first, they're going to be stuck in the hospital. If they're not at that level or they don't end up for treatment in the hospital somewhere, then they come to the DSS office. And the LMEs are still getting the capitation rate for that child. So, does that get passed on to whoever's taking care of this child? The hope is it will be better in places with the Child and Family Specialty Plan, but they're going to still be dealing with the same network of providers. Counties are still struggling because it is the staff dealing with tremendous loads and these are complex kids usually and they're not trained to deal with all the complex social issues so the team appreciates the collaboration to help us with what we're dealing with.

Mr. Rose talked about some good success working with counties to help their USDA time limits rate with the food and nutrition program. North Carolina has a 95% time limits rate this past week, and we've had some counties that we've been helping to get there.

David Lee provided an update about the long session. The deadlines DSS is tracking are the bill filing deadlines for both the House and Senate, which are in the end of March, beginning of April, and then the crossover deadline for any bills that would need to move over to the opposing chamber in May. DSS is tracking bills for both chambers, probably a couple hundred bills each have been filed. At DSS and the Division of Aging, the agencies are tracking together about 30 of those bills that would be directly impacting programs or the constituencies that DSS and Aging serve. And the process for is to review assigned bills, see what kind of impact that it would have for, again, our constituencies, our programs, even fiscal impact that that the bills might have and then we send that analysis to the department. A lot of the bills that have been filed are meant to try to provide protective measures for the children and adults, the vulnerable children, and adults.

IV. Staff Comments

Quarterly meeting dates for 2025:
June 11, September 10, December 10

V. Commission Comments

VI. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Robert Simmons to adjourn the quarterly meeting at 11:20 a.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Becky Andrews and carried without dissent.