

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

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Dr. Peter Robie, MD
Dr. Ricky Sides, DC
Ms. Claudette Weston
Ms. Gloria D. Whisenhunt, County Commissioner

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MINUTES June 3, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. J. Phil Seats, Chair
Mr. Fleming El-Amin, Vice Chair
Mr. John Blalock
Dr. Keith Cash
Ms. Pamela Corbett
Mr. John Davenport
Dr. Palmer Edwards
Dr. Calvert Jeffers
Dr. Charles Massler
Ms. Heather Parker
Dr. Linda L. Petrou
Ms. Sharon D. Pettiford
Ms. Sharon A. Rimm
Dr. Peter Robie
Dr. Ricky Sides
Ms. Claudette Weston
Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt

PH/DSS STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Shontell Robinson
Mr. Victor R. Isler
Mr. Joshua R. Swift
Ms. Lorrie Christie
Ms. Tanya Donnell

MEMBERS ABSENT

GUESTS PRESENT

None

Call to Order:

On Wednesday, June 3, 2020, the Forsyth County Health and Human Services (HHS) Board held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting, virtually, via Google Hangouts. Mr. J. Phil Seats, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Moment of Silence:

A moment of silence was observed by all.

Consideration of Minutes:

Mr. Seats asked if everyone had received the revised minutes that Ms. Shontell Robinson sent before the meeting noting a correction under Mr. John Blalock's section. Even though it was a one liner, it did completely change the meaning. After reviewing the correction, Mr. Seats asked for a motion to approve. Dr. Linda Petrou made a motion to approve the minutes and others seconded. The May 6, 2020 minutes were approved unanimously.

Assistant County Manager's Comments: Ms. Robinson gave the following updates (see handout on file in the Administrative Binder):

● **COVID-19 Update:**

- *Alternative Site Location for Homeless Individuals*
 - Reminder that they are closing the site on June 12th. They have not seen the census they were projecting. We need to utilize the Public Health staff to do contact tracing.
- *Covid-19 Funding*
 - The Board of Commissioners provided us with funding for testing for \$500,000. One of the first locations we will be doing will be in East Winston because there were no test location sites in East Winston-Salem. Opened one test site in the 27105 area but it is down University Parkway and would not technically be considered East Winston-Salem.
 - We received \$200,000 additional funding for enhanced outreach. We are partnering with the City of Winston-Salem to help us get more messaging out. They are helping us with some television and radio ads, billboards, and direct mailers. Public Health is out distributing masks and will probably do a mass mask distribution drive as well as some other things. We want to make sure that we are reaching all communities. We do have a very targeted strategy for our hispanic population - that is where our most pressing need is right now. We are planning to do outreach for all the communities. If you have any suggestions about what we are doing, certainly let us know.

Dr. Palmer Edwards asked Ms. Robinson about the City of Winston-Salem and outreach. He thought that maybe we could get some celebrity power to help with that, specifically Mr. Chris Paul, Mr. Tim Duncan, and Coach Jim Caldwell, even if they did something live because they may carry more weight. Ms. Robinson commented that this was a great idea. She added we will reach out and see what we can do, they can only say no but we will certainly ask!

● **Other Update:**

- *FY20-21 Budget*
 - It is budget time and although we are knee deep in COVID-19 we are also knee deep in our FY20-21 process. We have our budget workshop with our Commissioners tomorrow morning to discuss the budget. Our hearing is on June 8th and we have a budget workshop with the Commissioners on June 9th and 10th. We are hoping the budget will be adopted on June 11th - that will be for Fiscal Year 20-21.
 - Ms. Robinson concluded her comments but may have other comments to add as Mr. Joshua Swift provides his updates.

Department of Public Health (PH) Director's Comments: Mr. Swift started by thanking all the staff, especially the nurses and our partners in the community that have really stepped up. He added, there is no playbook – there are courses and we learn through public health education about pandemics but there is nothing to say this is what you do on day 80 and this is what you do on day 85. We are working through this. Mr. Swift gave the following updates (see complete/detailed handouts on file in the Administrative Binder):

● **COVID-19 Updates:**

- *Resume Normal Operations in Clinics, WIC, Dental and Environmental Health by July 1, 2020*
 - Modifications to keep staff and clients safe - face masks, physical distance
 - It has been a game changer to have all of our services online and keep a fairly robust schedule of operations – although it may not be at Highland Avenue, we have done it remotely and done curbside services with our clients
- *Testing*
 - There are expanded opportunities for testing at Novant/Baptist, CVS, FastMed and United Centers
 - Currently we have 20 testing sites in Forsyth County – we still see a void for testing in East Winston – 27105 zip code
- *Tracing*
 - We have State training and tracking system – working through the State system to track and trace these individuals who are positive and their contacts
- *Trends*
 - We are continuing to monitor trends - statewide and nationwide and across the county
 - 1,022 cases in May – we have seen an uptick of cases in May with over 1,000 cases between May 1 – May 31 – the majority of those cases came in the last two weeks of May; started June 1st with 162 cases

● **Liaison Updates:**

- *Homeless Shelters* – worked with homeless shelters to teach them best practices and how they can be prepared as COVID-19 becomes our new normal
- *Food Pantries* – thanked Mr. Victor Isler for allowing Ms. Gayle Swain to take the lead in working with pantries in the area to talk about best practices
 - Spanish Speaking Populations – Dr. Reina Rodriguez and Ms. Nohemi Campos distributed posters and handed out flyers to over 400 facilities, called businesses, visited apartment complexes, Hispanic owned churches and businesses, agencies, restaurants, reached out in person/via telephone, reached out to 188 places around Forsyth County
- *Long-Term Care Centers* – started reaching out in mid-March (electronically, by phone and site visits) – there are cases in seven facilities – we will continue outreach
- *Childcare Centers* – have done extensive outreach with our childcare centers especially Smart Start
- *Detention Center* – we already have a nurse Dr. Lindsay Novacek in the detention center helping them with best practices
- *Mental Health* – we are doing outreach through Cardinal
- *Faith Community* – have a liaison through the faith community – this person did outreach with the Chamber of Commerce and got a list of over 537 houses of worship – 274 of those were sent emails and 263 were sent regular mail with a checklist for safely

reopening, that the Health and Human Services provided along with contact information if they had questions. Also working with Love Out Loud, the Second Harvest Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity and we reached out to Dr. Goldie Bird with the Maya Angelo Center for Health Equity at Wake Forest and we are working with Pastor Tamilah Covington with the Minister's Conference of Winston-Salem and the vicinity providing information to the organization at their Tuesday meeting. Also working with Pastor Covington and Mr. Chuck Spong from Love Out Loud to host another educational session next Thursday, June 11th to a broader group of pastors and faith leaders in the community. In addition, Dr. Rodriguez is working with the Hispanic League of Winston-Salem and Hispanic houses of worship to provide information and education regarding COVID-19.

Mr. Swift continued on saying that the next few slides are a lot of information and numbers and he would be happy to answer questions at the end. Ms. Robinson mentioned the charts were literally added just before the meeting and asked everyone to follow along if they could access their computers.

● **COVID-19 Statistics:**

Mr. Swift shared charts detailing statistics for COVID-19 in Forsyth County as of May 31, 2020, prepared by Dr. Lovette Miller, Epidemiologist. The first summary statistic chart was based on zip codes as of May 31, 2020 (handout/chart on file in the Administrative Binder).

- Zip code (average around 4.2% been tested by population in Forsyth County with Rural Hall – 27045 zip code being the highest at 12.0%; 27105 zip code at 5.4% is the next highest and then 27051, Walkertown at 4.9%) – CVS testing sites have been opened on Robinhood and Country Club roads and Coliseum Drive – regional representative reached out and he asked if sites could be opened on Martin Luther King and Walkertown Road and she said they hope those will be in their next phase – also asked for a facility to be opened down near Wahlberg as they do their second wave of testing.

Dr. Petrou commented that she questions the figures when you say it is 4% of the population, roughly, that has been tested. She shared she has been tested twice so was it counted twice and she wonders how many other people have been tested numerous times that are in these counts. Mr. Swift responded that is a great question – we have asked Novant and Baptist, where we are getting our information, if they can scrub the data to make sure it is per person. He added he can not guarantee that something did not slip through.

Dr. Petrou then mentioned to Mr. Swift that he keeps talking about cases of people who have tested positive – does this necessarily mean people who are sick. She is trying to figure out what is a case. The media has scared us that anyone who gets COVID is going to die – so what is a case, someone who is sick or someone who has tested positive and does not show any symptoms. Mr. Swift explained that these are all laboratory confirmed cases. It could be a combination of both – some people are asymptomatic and have no symptoms and some people have symptoms and go to get tested.

Dr. Massler stated to clarify what Dr. Petrou asked, a case could be someone who tested positive but has absolutely no symptoms – that would be listed as a case. Mr. Swift responded that there have been misconceptions and I am not the medical doctor on this call, we know some doctors say okay, I have seen this a dozen times – most of the time it is the flu. He added all of our COVID-19 cases are not an opinion but confirmed laboratory cases.

Mr. Seats shared he has been under the impression that all these numbers we have been seeing – a case refers to a positive test. What if they did not have a test but they have symptoms, is that a case – it might be a case but it does not show up in these numbers, does it. Mr. Swift responded no. Mr. Seats wanted to make sure we know what we are looking at when we look at all these numbers.

Dr. Massler commented that a couple of weeks ago, Baptist was reporting tests that came back positive but were not reporting negative tests. Is this still the case? Mr. Swift responded no, we have been working with Dr. Christopher Ohl at Baptist and Dr. David Priest at Novant and we are getting both the positives and the negatives because that helps us put this information out. Ms. Robinson added, the information was being delayed. We were not able to get that information before for our report. Mr. Swift stated, just to be clear, when we reported on Monday, 162 positive cases, that is positive tests – the numbers you are seeing here is the percent of county residents that have been tested. Mr. Seats asked so a case equals a positive result and Mr. Swift responded, yes.

Dr. Peter Robie shared that 1,000 people his age, 70, who get COVID-19 testing that are positive, 27 are going to die; 973 will live. He found those numbers low. What is your reaction to that? Mr. Swift responded some people are not taking it seriously enough and some people are scared to death. We need to find a middle ground where we are taking caution and taking precautions and making sure people who need to be tested, are being tested. We are seeing those people who are frail or who are immune compromised, who are dying – most people do fine. And you have those that wait until it is too late. Dr. Robie then asked if the testing sites will follow up with the patient and Mr. Swift answered, yes, they will.

Dr. Edwards stated that a couple of weeks ago there had been some anecdotal reporting that had been distributed to the Board about the possibility of COVID-19 parties and exposures in the Hispanic community. Is there any more word on that? Mr. Swift responded that we did hear anecdotally about COVID-19 parties. We have not heard anything in the past few weeks but that does not mean it is not occurring. We have been doing outreach to the Hispanic communities. We are trying to battle some of the misconceptions out there with outreach in the community.

Dr. Massler thought Dr. Edward's comment was a really good idea. If we do not have people out of our community that have a name recognition like Mr. Tim Duncan or Mr. Chris Paul out of the black community, if we could appeal to people in the Hispanic community outside of North Carolina that we could use as a marketing tool, to appeal to our Hispanic community, it would be worth pursuing.

Mr. Seats commented he would piggy back on Dr. Massler's question concerning what we are seeing in the Hispanic community. He said obviously we need to focus on the Hispanic community since that is where most of the numbers are coming from right now. What are the trackers learning about behaviors contributing to the spread going on in that community? Mr. Swift responded that is a good question, we are having trouble with people answering our calls, there is a distrust of the government so trying to reach out is a hurdle. Also, people have to work and put food on the table especially when you have a job that does not have sick time. If you are in a household where multiple people have it, it could take three to four weeks before people clear and can go back to work. Also, the living situations, not being able to separate help to cause spread, lots of people living in the home, cleaning in the home, neighbors visiting or other family members who do not live there, just everyday things.

Mr. Seats asked if most of these cases are coming through different neighborhoods, or mainly the Waughtown area that we have been hearing about? Mr. Swift responded the testing is occurring mostly in Waughtown but the people are coming from all throughout Forsyth County. Ms. Robinson shared we are hearing that some employers are requiring people to come into work sick and threatening them to lose their jobs. We are partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and they are in the process of sending out a letter to all businesses about the importance of wearing masks and social distancing and not allowing employees to come in sick. We are also partnering with Social Services and Crisis Control about financial support for people to isolate. Trying to meet the whole person and have some resources available to them – we are doing extra effort as well.

Mr. Seats asked how big of a role, if any, is language barrier playing and do we have enough bilingual trackers to do the job. Mr. Swift responded language is not really an issue, culturally reaching a population is the biggest barrier. Ms. Robinson added, we also have the language line.

Ms. Gloria Whisenhunt shared, we need to understand folks are scared to death they are going to lose their jobs – they need to work. Have to encourage employers to allow people to be sick and not fire them.

Mr. Swift continued on with his presentation, talking briefly about the remainder of his charts which included the following (handouts/charts on file in the Administrative Binder):

- Summary Statistics Based on Race/Ethnicity;
- Trend in Confirmed Cases per 100,000 Population;
- Case count comparison for five surrounding counties;
- Trend for Residents Hospitalized from COVID-19; and
- Summary Statistics for Forsyth County COVID-19 Tests

Mr. El-Amin asked if we are using the Public Health Lab and Mr. Swift responded we are working to get the facility up (7,000 test kits will now be available, hopefully by the end of June).

Ms. Heather Parker commented to Mr. Swift that she had heard him mention Baptist and Novant and she was assuming he was including both Clemmons and Kernersville locations in that statement. Mr. Swift responded he was referring to all of the testing sites for Baptist and Novant including Clemmons and Kernersville.

Dr. Petrou asked if any thought had been given to how much we may see because of all the protesting – are we expecting a big uptick of people who test positive and Mr. Swift responded I really do not know, have not seen anything about it. He stated what he is most concerned about is as we get back to the normal routine, with more people – as we go back into the workplace, businesses and malls open, we will be around more people and we have to be diligent about wearing our masks and washing our hands.

Dr. Edwards commented that people are pushing back – is this a lot of the population – suggested work with the City of Winston-Salem to offset some of the social media. What is your take on that? Mr. Swift responded on a daily basis, people contact him and Ms. Robinson and he is worried. Some people have an audience, lots of conspiracy theories – he added should concentrate on the positives.

Mr. Seats brought up the importance of wearing masks and commenting, what good is it for some to be wearing masks and others not. If we can express that in our campaign, that would be good. Mr. Swift responded he would like to make wearing a mask the macho thing to do. Dr. Petrou asked Mr. Swift if the Board could help with anything. Mr. Swift responded they could help promote the correct information on social media if they have an account.

Department of Social Services (DSS) Director's Comments: Mr. Isler reported the following (see complete/detailed handout on file in the Administrative Binder).

● **COVID-19 Updates:**

- *Continued Growth in FNS Applications* (April - 2,404; May - 2,511)
- *P-EBT Issuance and Concerns*
 - May – concerns with addresses used – call center letting people know how to correct their addresses. Mr. Isler asked that any complaints be directed to him.
- *Increased Utilization of Rental Assistance*
 - Thanked Commissioners for funding (\$25,000 in March)
- *Face to Face Waivers Approved Until 6/30/2020*
 - Will likely be extended - looking at reopening
- *Court for Child Support and Child Welfare to Resume 6/1/2020* – have been in a lot of discussions with our Chief Judge

Dr. Edwards asked if there had been an increased rate of domestic abuse during the shelter in place. Are you picking up on that as a trend? Mr. Isler responded there had been a decrease for the number of call-ins as it relates to Child Protective Service cases. Our eyes and ears were our teachers. The top reporters are hospitals, law enforcement and the school system. We may have a decrease in call-ins, however, when you look at the severity of abuse and neglect cases, we have seen an uptick in those reports being screened in.

Wake Forest Baptist Hospital - COVID Update: Mr. Blalock reported the following:

● **COVID Cases:**

- Both medical centers in Forsyth County have seen an increase in our COVID hospitalizations. For example, this week we have been running around 55-60 confirmed hospitalizations per day within the Wake system, with another 25-30 patients being persons under investigation. A month ago when I reported, we had been running the same level of PUIs; however our confirmed hospitalizations was running in the 25/day range so we have easily doubled our hospitalizations since early May and seem to be maintaining at this elevated level. Roughly 50% of these patients are requiring ICU level care (this is up from around 25% of patients in early May), so the acuity of those patients is higher.
- We continue to be very fluid in terms of establishing dedicated care spaces for our COVID patients in order to best isolate them from the rest of our patient population. So as our cases grow, we have implemented new units and care spaces.
- Overall, we still seem to be doing well with our ability to manage our COVID population.
- No major challenges with PPE
- We are managing through nurse staffing
- There was a hiccup with lab testing turnaround as we began opening up more testing, particularly related to our Surgical/Procedural re-emergence strategies; but our Lab services have responded well. Right now our IP turnaround is about 7-12 hours from

swab to result (depending on the campus) and we have virtually had no surgical/procedural case delayed due to not having test results in a timely manner. We are performing around 600 tests per day right now.

● **General Volumes:**

- If you remember at the last board meeting I also spoke to the general impact that the Wake health system had experienced due to COVID with respect to reduced patient volumes, and I also mentioned that we had re-emergence strategies that were to take place in the month of May. We did start to see some of that business come back during the month of May.

To give you some perspective:

IP cases - (85% of pre-COVID baseline, up from 70% in April)

Surgical cases - (90% up from 45%)- A lot of IP increase due to this

Clinic visits - (85% up from 60%)

- Anticipating at this point in time being at the 90%/100% mark by early June.
- This clinic activity is a mix of physical visits plus tele-health. We have seen more in person visits than what we were expecting; however, this could be due to the nature of that first visit given the extended time with limited access. We hope the traction we made with tele-visits during our Stay at Home period will continue in the future.

ED visits - (66% up from 50%)

- Slowly coming back... Adult (78% of baseline) Peds (45% of baseline)
- This clinic activity
 - a. Higher acuity mix
 - b. Patients who need to come in had not been (chronic conditions, diabetes, heart failure, renal, etc.) - concerns we have had.

Public Comment:

None

Other Business or Announcements:

Mr. Seats mentioned that it has been a past tradition that we do not have a July meeting and asked for the Board's thoughts. It was agreed that they would honor that tradition of not having a July meeting. Mr. Seats confirmed that the next meeting will be held August 5, 2020 and they will have to conduct an election of a Chair and Vice Chair. He told Board members that they can send their nominations to the nominating committee, consisting of Dr. Calvert Jeffers and Ms. Whisenhunt or they can nominate someone at the next meeting.

Dr. Massler told Mr. Isler, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Swift that he was sorry they have taken some slack in the community and told them they are doing a great job and asked them to share that with staff.

Adjourn:

Mr. Seats asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. El-Amin made a motion and several others seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

SR/lgc

Next Meeting: August 5, 2020 - 5:30pm