

**Wake County Human Services Board
Meeting Minutes
July 23, 2020**

Board Members Present:

Fiorella Horna
Deborah Lawson
Dr. Randy Marsh
John Myhre
Dr. John Perry
Margaret Raynor
Ann Rollins
Frank Eagles
Stephanie Treadway
Angie Welsh
Commissioner James West
McKinley Wooten

Guests Present:

Kyrie McKinney
Melissa Singh

Staff Members Present:

Commissioner Vickie Adamson
Anita Davis
Caroline Harper
Brittany Hunt
Annemarie Maiorano
Heather Miranda
Ken Murphy
Dr. Nicole Mushonga
Derwick Paige
Andre Pierce
Paige Rosemond
Jessica Sanders
Liz Scott
Dr. Joseph Threadcraft
Cassandra Watford

Call to Order

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.

Reflections

(Presented by Chair Ms. Angie Welsh)

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh noted that the world and Wake County were in the middle of a great deal of change. In the June 2020 Human Services Board meeting, the Board celebrated the retirement of Human Services Director Ms. Regina Petteway. Ms. Welsh shared a thank you note that Director Petteway had written to the Board members for all of their contributions and collaboration during her time at Wake County Human Services. Ms. Welsh also noted how she, Ms. Ann Rollins, and Mr. John Myhre were participating in assessment centers meant to give insight into candidates for the Human Services Director position. They were joined by Public Health Committee community member Dr. Barbara Ann Hughes. The assessment process was meant to give a deeper understanding of the candidates in addition to their resumes and interviews. Mr. Derwick Paige confirmed that the process successfully helped management narrow the hiring pool to two candidates. Further interviews with these two finalists would be occurring within the coming weeks.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Ms. Angie Welsh asked for a motion to approve the June 25th meeting minutes. There was a motion by Ms. Margaret Raynor and Mr. John Myhre seconded to accept both minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Next Board Meeting – August 27, 2020

Treasurers Report

(Presented by Ms. Margaret Raynor)

Treasurer Ms. Margaret Raynor reported that there was no change from the total last month. The current balance of the Board fund is \$5,530.92.

Ms. Paige Rosemond, Child Welfare Division Director, asked the Board to consider a donation to twenty-two Wake County graduates who were a part of foster care. The donation would be in line with previous years' donations from the Board to such graduates as graduation gifts.

A proposal was made to donate \$50 per graduate for a total donation of \$1,100.00. There was a motion by Mr. Frank Eagles and Mr. John Myhre seconded the motion. This proposal was unanimously accepted.

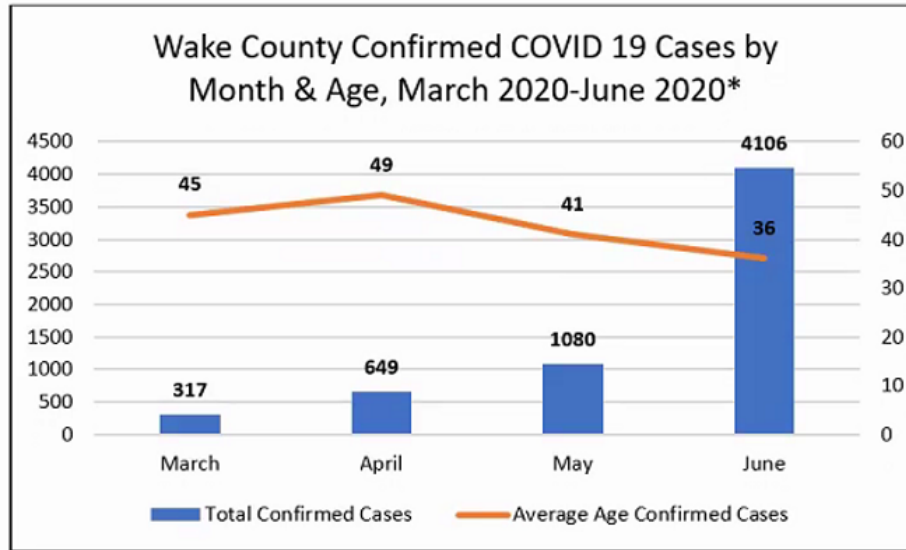
COVID-19 Update

(Presented by Dr. Nicole Mushonga and Ms. Heather Miranda)

Ms. Heather Miranda, Clinical Operations Director, shared that pharmacies would resume issuing injections for behavioral health patients on August 3rd. Previously, this was not feasible due to an adjusted pharmacy model used in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Focus has also been on preparing children and adolescents for required school immunizations. With COVID-19 testing, the first Wake County employee testing date was held on July 22nd. Mass testing will be moving to the parking deck of the Wake County Sunnybrook Human Services building in order to provide more shade for County workers from the summer heat. The Summer Food Program is still being held as a “pick up and grab” service. Through twenty-one days of service, Wake County has provided 1,085 meals.

Dr. Nicole Mushonga, Epidemiology Program Manager, provided data on the number of COVID-19 cases from March 2020 to the end of June 2020. The County reported its first positive COVID-19 resident in early March 2020. Since that initial case, there have been 6,152 cases through June 30th, 2020.

The data in the graph below is evaluating confirmed cases reported through the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NCEDSS) during this time period.



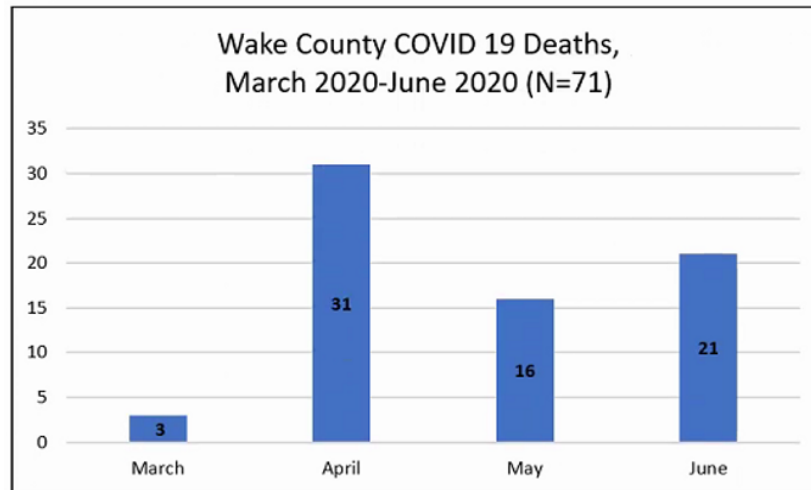
*Does not include cases without a recorded specimen date

As the pandemic has evolved, there has been an increase in testing as well as an increase in the number of positive cases. With that evolution, there has been significant changes in the demographics of the populations affected by COVID-19. As the number of cases has increased, there has been a significant decline in the average age of the population for confirmed cases. Since March 2020, there has been a 20% decrease in age from 45 to the average age of 36 in the month of June, with the overall average age of 39 for confirmed cases. Wake County has seen an increase in cases among minority populations, specifically within the Hispanic population. There have been 2,041 confirmed cases in the Hispanic population from March through June. The number of confirmed cases in the Hispanic population has increased 176%, with 508 cases in May and 1,400 cases in June.

Wake County COVID 19 Cases by Race/Ethnicity*			
Month	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic
March	172	78	23
April	204	233	110
May	211	154	508
June	465	381	1400
Total	1052	846	2041

*Does not include cases with unknown or blank responses

The number of deaths associated with the pandemic has continued to increase, but it has not mirrored the same increase that has been seen with positive cases. There were seventy-one COVID-19 related deaths from March through June, with the highest number of deaths in April. Many of those deaths were associated with outbreaks.



COVID-19 continues to impact Wake County. The County has established mass testing sites to increase testing throughout the community. Partnerships are also being developed with organizations to address the increasing burden of the virus on minority populations.

Mr. Frank Eagles asked how the County was focusing on outreach to the Hispanic community given the higher rate of cases in minority populations. Ms. Fiorella Horna spoke to her volunteer work with the Latinx community. Three areas that the County has requested focus on are outreach, education, and testing and contact tracing. For outreach, this includes working with community health workers to have informed personnel out in these communities. Education campaigns blend with this effort. One push will be for bilingual assistance on-site at testing locations. Another concern has been cost. While Wake County provides free testing for COVID-19, some in the Latinx community have received invoices when attempting to be tested at non-County facilities. This understandably created hesitations with pursuing further tests. When asked about religious communities, Ms. Horna confirmed that some churches with large Latinx communities were being scheduled to receive concerted education efforts.

Public Health Report: Chronic Disease [Accreditation Benchmark #2.4c]

(Presented by Dr. Nicole Mushonga)

Dr. Nicole Mushonga shared the Public Health Report on Chronic Disease with the Human Services Board. Cancer remains the number one cause of death in Wake County. However, all cancer mortality rates have continued to decrease over time. Racial disparity between African-American men and all other ethnic and racial groups still persists. The top cancer-causing deaths are trachea/bronchus/lung cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon/rectum/anal cancer, and pancreatic cancer.

Heart disease is the second leading cause of death, though it has decreased by 5% from 2010-2014 to 2014-2018. Men have higher rates of death than women when it comes to heart disease. While rates have decreased for most populations over the last five years, there has been a 133% increased rate for Hispanic men from 2010-2014 to 2014-2018.

Alzheimer's Disease is now the sixth leading cause of death in Wake County. Death rates are higher in women than men. The overall death rate has increased by 43%. The most significant and persistent death rate disparity was revealed to be diabetes. The overall death rate has remained stable from 2010-2014 to 2014-2018. The Wake County Minority Diabetes Prevention program (MDPP) was established and has had four cohorts composed of 72 total participants in response to this data. With an 83-100% retention rate in the program, these participants have taken the Prevent T2 program, which is a Center for Disease Control (CDC)-approved curriculum focused on preventing the onset of Type II diabetes. Since March of 2020, engagement has been maintained with online videos, FaceTime, and Zoom calls.

Dr. Mushonga summarized results noting that, overall, chronic disease mortality rates were decreasing. Heart disease and heart attack death rates remained with a significant gap between genders. Stroke, diabetes, and kidney disease have had a persistent racial disparity in death rates.

Board members briefly discussed how COVID-19 deaths might be coded in future reports given how several features of the disease could be contributing factors of death. Time will determine how and if COVID-19 deaths appear in reports moving forward.

Ms. Angie Welsh noted that the Human Services Board had received the report. Ms. Ann Rollins made a motion to accept the report and Ms. Margaret Raynor seconded. The report was unanimously accepted.

Wake County Pool Regulations Review

(Presented by Ms. Jessica Sanders and Mr. Andre Pierce)

Ms. Jessica Sanders, Environmental Health Program Manager – Plan Review, presented the revisions to the regulations governing swimming pools in Wake County. The Wake County Department of Environmental Services (WCDES) Swimming Pool Regulations were initially adopted in 1996. The latest amendments were adopted in 2009 and advancement in technology has led to outdated regulations. Over the past six months, current regulations and proposed changes have been vetted with staff and stakeholders with consensus from both groups about the revisions. The major changes were outlined in six highlights, as follows:

1. Emergency Phone – Proposed change is the removal of the landline telephone requirement to allow for cellular technology. Section 15(d)
2. Rinse Shower – Proposed change is the elimination of the requirement for a rinse shower on the pool deck. Section 15(f)
3. Restroom Facilities – Proposed change allows restroom access to be located near the pool rather than from the pool deck area. Section 11
4. Certified Pool and Spa Operator (CPO) Certificates – Proposed change adds the requirement that CPO certificates be kept onsite. Section 7(d)(5)
5. Test Kits – Proposed change requires the test kit to meet NSF/ANSI certification rather than specific parameters for each type of test (Cl, pH, etc.). Section 8(a)
6. Lighting Levels – Proposed change reduces the lighting requirement to artificial lighting provided for chemical storage and equipment rooms. Section 12(e) and 13(e)

Each change was analyzed to determine the possible impact on the industry and public health at-large. Some changes were made to better align with national regulations.

Ms. Fiorella Horna asked for clarification with the emergency phone item. She noted that, at times, phone reception could be an issue and be a deadly hindrance during an emergency. Ms. Sanders confirmed that the language change was meant to add more flexibility and usage of cellphones without the total elimination of landlines.

Ms. Angie Welsh noted that the Human Services Board had received the report. Mr. Frank Eagles made a motion to accept the report and Mr. McKinley Wooten seconded. The report was unanimously accepted.

Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)

(Presented by Ms. Anita Davis)

Ms. Anita Davis, Medicaid Transportation Manager, spoke to the changes within the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) after a series of e-mail notifications to Human Services Board members. GoWake is a community transportation program that provides on-demand complimentary paratransit transportation to Wake County citizens who are elderly or disabled. Rural transportation is provided into the outlying areas of Wake County. Medicaid transportation is also provided, which is the highest sponsored agency. These trips are possible because of grants Wake County Human Services receives. One of the longest standing of these grants, the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP), is a state-funded program that is administered by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The program provided a yearly allocation to multiple transportations throughout North Carolina. In June 2020, House Bill 77 passed into law and eliminated ROAP funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. This resulted in a loss of approximately \$670,000 for GoWake. This represents around 25,000 to 30,000 trips for the year. Additional funding is being received through the United States Department of Transportation's Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act fund. The first round of funds is estimated to be \$283,000. This has already been approved and will be used to offset operational costs. Another round of funds (estimated to be \$590,000) has not yet been approved, but is in discussion.

Departmental Budget Updates – Human Services

(Presented by Ms. Cassandra Watford)

Ms. Cassandra Watford, Human Services Finance Officer, presented an in-depth Human Services departmental budget update which expanded upon the presentation to the Board from the June 2020 meeting.

On June 15th, 2020, the Wake County Board of Commissioners (BOC) adopted the budget for the FY21. The approved budget establishes a \$1.47 billion General Fund budget for FY21 and consists of total reductions of \$23,000,000 countywide. Human Services is the largest County department with total expenditures representing 14% of the County's overall FY21 adopted budget. This is \$162,454,975 in expenditures and \$80,435,456 in revenues. This is broken down as follows:

Expenditures

- Salary/Benefits - 75%
- Contractual Services - 36%
- Other - 8%
- Transfers Out - 1%

Revenues

- State - 66%
- Charges for Services - 18%
- Federal - 15%
- Other Financing Sources - 1%

The budget reduced six full-time equivalent (FTE) employee positions and around \$5,594,000. However, \$1,157,834 of expansion were approved along with three FTEs.

Ms. Watford then expanded on the percent of revenue per Human Services Division.

- Economic and Social Services – 43%
- Child Welfare – Social Services – 20%
- Public Health – 13%
- Health Clinics – 17%
- Administration and Operations – 7%

Ms. Angie Welsh noted that the Human Services Board had received the report. Mr. John Myhre made a motion to accept the report and Dr. John Perry seconded. The report was unanimously accepted.

Committee Chairs Update

(Presented by Ms. Ann Rollins, Dr. Randy Marsh, and Mr. Frank Eagles)

Ms. Ann Rollins noted that the Public Health Committee last met on July 17th. Because the Committee had not met in some months due to COVID-19, the Committee discussed the future plans and priorities. The Committee also heard a presentation about the Pool Regulations and received a COVID-19 update. Future focuses will include vaping as well as how to assist the County as response to the pandemic continues. COVID-19 has impacted everything from education to behavioral health to environmental services and the Committee discussed how they could best provide support to the public.

Dr. Randy Marsh shared that the Social Services Committee had decided not to meet in light of COVID-19. This is being considered as each meeting approaches with the next meeting projected for September 2020.

Mr. Frank Eagles reported that the Regional Networks Committee had not formally met, though the Regional Centers had been having virtual Community Advocacy Committee (CAC) meetings. The Directors of the Regional Centers have been extremely active and collaborative during the pandemic.

Human Services Director's Report

(Presented by Ms. Annemarie Maiorano)

Ms. Annemarie Maiorano, Deputy Director of Operations, commended the Directors of the Regional Centers for being strong presences in the establishment of the Emergency Operation Center's (EOC) COVID-19 response. Heavily involved with the healthy hotels in charge of assisting Wake County's homeless population shelter-in-place, these Directors will begin to return to their Regional Center positions during the month of July. The Regional Networks Committee, then, is expected to begin meeting more regularly, albeit virtually. The Millbrook Human Services Center is still moving to Departure Drive with limited operations expected in September 2020. Ms. Maiorano also recognized Ms. Karen Morant, Western Human Services Center Director, and her instrumental work in assisting with food distribution in the western region of Wake County.

In November 2020, Administration of Human Services along with staff at the Horizons location are expected to move to a joint location. Such moves were planned far before COVID-19 and though the current environment must rely upon virtual meetings, the hope and intent is to one day return to more face-to-face meetings. In addition to the move for these staff members, a new Public Health center is also being planned.

Next, Ms. Liz Scott, Economic Services Division Director, updated the Board on Economic Services. On August 3rd, Human Services will be operating a utilities assistance program with funding from the CARES Act. Participating utility providers, including those in Wake County municipalities, will place bills in moratorium and the County will have roughly \$5,000,000 to aid the public. This program is in addition to utility assistance already offered through the County. The CARES Act assistance will amount in approximately \$500 of assistance per user that will be paid directly to the respective utility program. Salary limitations will apply to the assistance. Communication should be released within the next week.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) also received good news in the form of renewed waivers for food for the months of July and August. This prevents those benefiting from the program from having to lose their benefits in the demand for additional paperwork. Finally, Ms. Scott shared that court did reopen for child support in June 2020. Meeting the demands of court has been challenging when trying to meet the social distancing guidelines.

Ms. Paige Rosemond provided the Child Welfare update. The impact from COVID-19 had caused Wake County to undergo a temporary hiring freeze that County Manager David Ellis has released as of July 7th. Noting this, staffing remains a focus in Child Welfare. In 2018, there was a 28% vacancy rate. As of June 30th, 2020, the vacancy rate is 5.9%. The hope is to continue this positive trend. Currently, staff are continuing to work remotely and within the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) in response to COVID-19. Ms. Rosemond also shared a video link (<https://vimeo.com/430078064>) to a video produced by Wake County meant to educate others on the signs of neglect and abuse, especially during COVID-19 where the community is staying at home more regularly.

Environmental Services Director's Report

(Presented by Dr. Joseph Threadcraft)

Dr. Joseph Threadcraft, Director of Environmental Services, detailed Environmental Services' response to COVID-19. The top priority is to continue to staff and support the EOC. Environmental Health and Safety with Mr. Andre Pierce, Environmental Health and Safety Director, has made innumerable contributions of staff, time, and resources to the EOC in response to COVID-19. Currently, the only impact to service delivery for Environmental Services is with Solid Waste, educational outreach, and comingled recycling in the Wake County Public School System. Opportunities to extend services into the community are continually being sought by Environmental Services. This includes facilitating access to these services. For example, Animal Services has enforced visits by appointments in order to keep traffic contained and abide by social distancing guidelines. Dr. Jennifer Federico, Animal Services Director, recently did outreach work in the community with the Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Vickie Adamson. In Environmental Health and Safety and Water Quality, staff are working directly in the field with continued restaurant and pool inspections. Staff are still being active during the pandemic running maintenance and providing services to ensure that the County's health is a priority.

In Solid Waste, the waste disposal at the convenience and multimedia centers have seen a 20 to 30% increase during the pandemic shutdown. Mr. John Roberson, Solid Waste Management Director, continues to be in contact with and collaborate with vendors to improve overall customer experience.

Public Comments

Ms. Melissa Singh voiced her concerns to the Board about her and her son's privacy. There was a lack of communication after Ms. Singh had received concerning comments from a County employee. Believing this employee to have a conflict of interest with their work and seeking assistance with no response, Ms. Singh asked for a response from staff. Ms. Paige Rosemond, Child Welfare Division Director, and Mr. Derwick Paige, Chief Vitality Community Officer, both reached out to Ms. Singh during the meeting and would be working with her for a resolution to these concerns.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 AM.

Board Chair's Signature: Angie C. Welsh Date: 11/4/2020

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Brittany Hunt