

**MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 6:01 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Casey Joe Johnson, Commissioner David Gambill, Commissioner Eddie Settle, and Commissioner Brian S. Minton.

Also present for the meeting were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Keith Elmore welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at this time.

INVOCATION – Vice Chairman Casey Joe Johnson led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Keith Elmore led the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Eddie Settle, seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on August 16, 2022.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 2 (Social Services – Received Supplemental Chafee (LINKS) funding of \$32,000 for SFY 2022-2023, North Carolina Department of Social Services (NCDSS) has a one-time use of additional Chafee funds available to support the purchase of school uniforms and clothing. Each county using these funds must expense \$500.00 per youth. No county funds required). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Eddie Settle to approve Budget Amendment No. 3 (Sheriff – The Wilkes County Sheriff's Department has received funds from NC DHHS Corrections in the amount of \$90,205, these funds are to be used for prevention, detection and mitigation of infectious diseases. No county funds involve). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and was approved. Commissioner David Gambill abstained from voting on this Budget Amendment.

Motion was made by Commissioner Brian S. Minton to approve Budget Amendment No. 4 (Health – Programs – Wilkes Health received \$10,719.91 from Appalachian District Health Department. These funds are reimbursement for the State RPA workforce development grant. No county money involved. Wilkes Health received \$502,362 in Medicaid Cost Settlement funds. These funds will be utilized in programs and the dental clinic to provide care to underinsured/uninsured patients of Wilkes County. No county money involved. Wilkes Health

received \$133,102 in CDC COVID Vaccination funds. These funds will be utilized to provide COVID testing and vaccinations with an emphasis on reaching high-risk and underserved populations. No county money involved). The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Brian S. Minton to approve Budget Amendment No. 5 (Garage – This budget request is to reallocate garage expense funds of \$12,000 to capital outlay vehicles so that the garage can purchase a vehicle). The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

JCPC BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENTS – John Yates stated the Wilkes County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council sent a memo and would like to recommend Jimmy Poplin for a 2-year term appointment to fill the vacancy on their board created by the resignation of Heather Sain as the Mental Health Representative from Vaya Health. They are also recommending Maggie Bullard a student from East Wilkes High School for a 2-year term appointment to fill the vacancy as Youth Representative.

Commissioner Brian S. Minton made a motion to appoint Jimmy Poplin and Maggie Bullard to the JCPC Board for a 2-year term as requested and presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

VAYA HEALTH – UPDATE – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Zack Shepherd, Community Relations Regional Director. Mr. Shepherd thanked the Board and said he would like to provide a short update from Vaya and the MCO. He presented the below PowerPoint presentation at this time:

Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

Zack Shepherd
Community Relations Regional Director
09/06/2022

CURRENT CHALLENGES

INCREASED DEMAND AND LIMITED RESOURCES

- Since the end of the pandemic there has been a rising increase in
 - The need for child and adult mental health and substance use services across NC
 - The loss of mental health, substance use, and I/DD professionals leaving the profession
- Additionally, the expansion of new health plans in NC and the ability for staff to accept remote positions nationally has created significant competition on local limited NC staffing resources
- These factors have created waitlists for services across the healthcare system
- Vaya has been working with providers to meet these unique challenges while trying to expand and develop new service opportunities across the Vaya region.

STABILIZE WALK-IN CENTERS

Vaya increased outpatient rates at Crisis Walk-in Centers to:

1. Stabilize physician and clinical staff (retention of existing staff)
2. Recruit additional staff (increased reimbursement)
3. Improve access to same day care in rural communities
4. Incentivize face to face service in rural communities
5. Expand access to Substance Use services

Strategies to Address Workforce Challenges

- Increased rates across all service area to promote competitive recruitment and retention.
- Targeted rate increases for Direct Support Professionals for more competitive pay for key community-based behavioral health and intellectual/developmental services.
- Targeted work and funding with providers to develop strategies for recruitment and retention.
- Utilizing funding to allow providers to incentive staffing in more rural counties.
- Focused work with Vaya Provider Advisory Council to develop recruitment and retention strategies across service and disability.

5

STATE-WIDE CHILD AND YOUTH IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

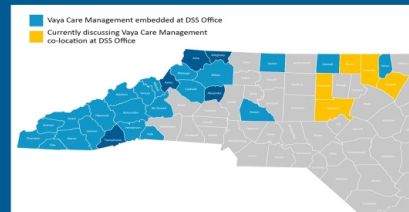
IMPROVEMENT AREAS

- Vaya is working with all LME/MCO's to establish a standardized seamless transition of care for children placed outside of the Vaya Health Plan region
- Vaya is implementing a standardized pass-through authorization process for children entering residential treatment services to eliminate any barriers for children needing to quickly enter residential treatment
- Vaya is working with other LME/MCO's and Benchmarks to develop a standardized referral process for all residential provider
- Vaya continues to expand a statewide open network to improve access to care for child services
- Reduce or eliminate the need for Out of Network Agreements prior to entry to care

7

IMPROVEMENT AREAS CONT'D

- Vaya continues to support DSS' by co-locating our Care Management with DSS for clinical and system support



8

IMPROVEMENT AREAS CONT'D

- Vaya has an escalation protocol for DSS' to notify Vaya leadership of acute high risk cases including 24/7 access through the Vaya Call Center outside business hours
- Vaya is raising rates to expand access to crisis/emergency beds to reduce/eliminate the needs for DSS to temporarily house children with an emergency need
 - Vaya currently have 38 crisis beds that are available for Vaya Members
 - Vaya is actively working to add 20 additional crisis beds over the next 3 months (pending DHSR approval)

9

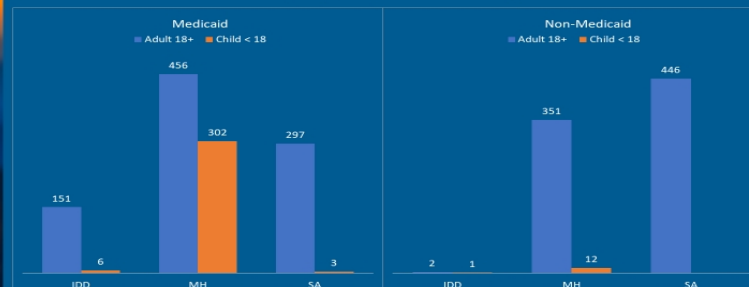
EXPANDING ACCESS TO THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE - PROFESSIONAL PARENTING

- Vaya increased TFC rate from \$97.22 to \$175.00 per day (Emergency Respite \$360.00 per day)
- Our goal is to create an extensive TFC network that allows our children to remain in their home communities with TFC parents dedicated to children's success and transitioning home
- In the coming weeks Vaya will be reaching out to contracted TFC providers to discuss these goals and to monitor the success of these new rates meeting the following objectives:
 - Improving the retention rate of current TFC families
 - Expanding the number of therapeutic homes across the Vaya region
 - Supporting children being served in their local communities with their local support systems
 - Improving the coordination of services for children in care by assuring children are connected with medical, dental, and behavioral health services
 - Providing additional support and training to TFC families

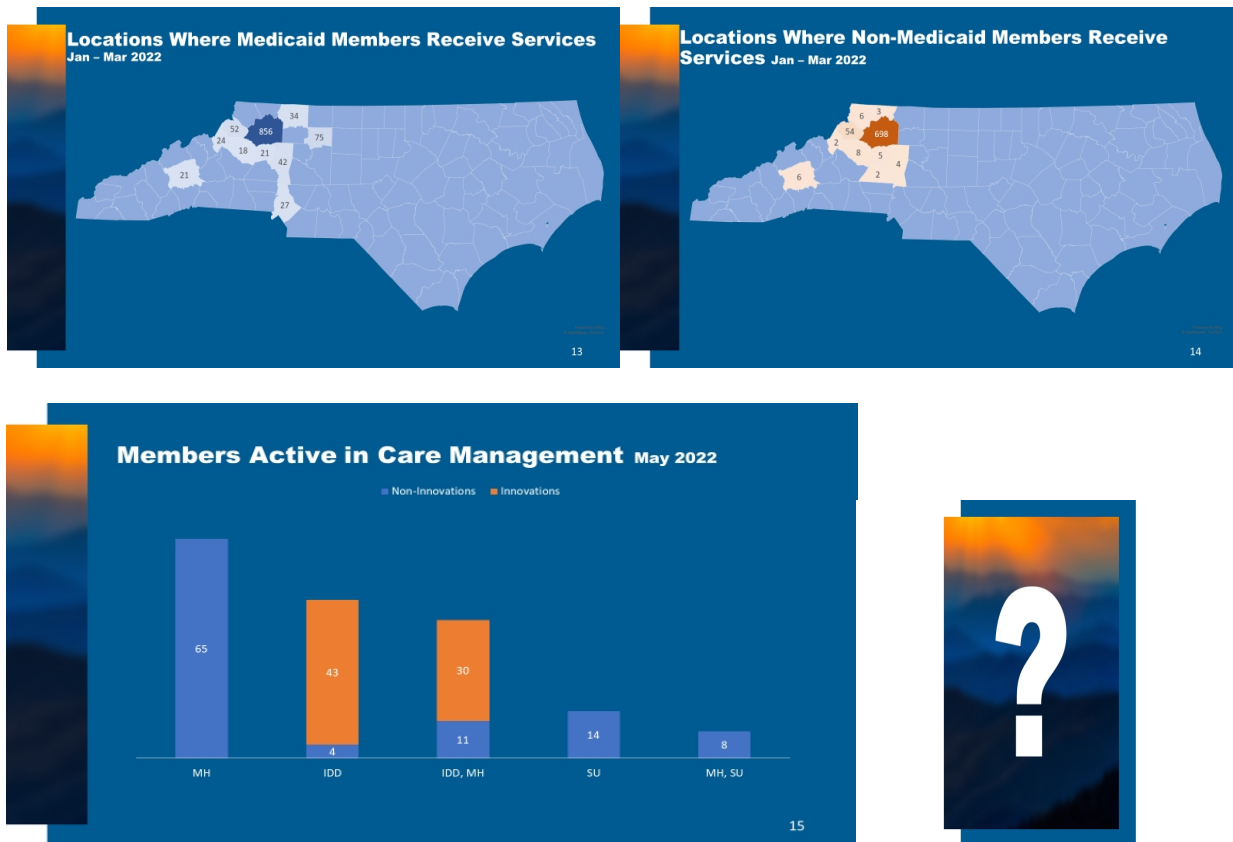
10

County Data Highlights

Members Served by Age & Disability Jan - Mar 2022



12



Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked Mr. Shepherd for the update.

WILKES VOLUNTARY AND ENHANCED VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT – BOARD APPOINTMENTS – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Claude Shew, Jr, Committee Chairman, Rob Baldwin, Wilkes SWCD Director, Julie Hardy, Conservation Education Specialist. Chairman Elmore asked if the EVAD takes the place of the VAD Board. Mr. Baldwin replied yes, there is one Board now that covers both they are combined into one Board and two programs. He added when the new Ordinance was approved for the VAD and EVAD new Board appointments are required, even though the members were currently serving on the VAD Board. Mr. Triplett agreed and added they are starting from scratch, it is one Board with two programs. The Board needs to be re-appointed to get the rotations of terms started over.

Mr. Baldwin said the book in front of the Board is the final document that came from a grant they received in 2019 and this is what allowed them to have the new VAD EVAD Ordinance. They will have a roll out and hope they can all attend, it will be held on November 17th. He added they applaud this Board for seeing the need that farmland needs protection. Mr. Baldwin said in July, which is after this Board approved the VAD EVAD, a report came out from the American Farmland Trust that said N.C. is #2 in potential lost farmland in the nation behind Texas. They appreciate their efforts and what they do. Chairman Elmore added Commissioner

Settle and all the Board played a big part in getting to this point. He asked when farmers retire who will take over. Mr. Shew replied no-one they are not growing farmers any more. Chairman Elmore added that is scary, the work force in general has checked out. Mr. Shew said it is low pay, they are their own boss, but most children today can go get a computer job and make 10 times what they make. Commissioner Settle added it is a challenge, he raises cattle, they have 40% inflation, diesel fuel and everything else has doubled, but they get the same price. Farmers are making less and less.

Chairman Elmore stated the people they have listed represents the entire county and is a great list of Board members. He added they all will do a good job. The Wilkes County Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District would like to request the following members be appointed to the VAD and EVAD Board: Donald Parker, James Motsinger, Dennis McGrady, Claude Shew, Jr., Benny S. Alexander, Jimmy Church, Toby Lee Speaks, Brenda Blake, and Dan Bumgarner. All members are in good standing and will serve a 3-year term to run from date of approval until June 30, 2024.

Mr. Shew stated agricultural is the # 1 industry in Wilkes County and they all know that. He encouraged the Commissioners to think about ways to advertise their products, they need a big Farmers Market in Wilkes County, folks need a place to sale. They need somewhere to sell products 6-days a week that are grown here. Chairman Elmore stated they have room at the back of the Ag Center. Commissioner Settle added they need something outside to, there is bottom land below the Ag Center. Mr. Shew said that would be great and asked them to think about it. Commissioner Gambill added that is just off 421, easy to get on and off and to find, it would be a good location to start. Chairman Elmore stated they are the experts and need to give them a plan. Mr. Shew said they will look at it and get back with them. Thanks to this Board they have a beautiful Ag Center and appreciate all they do for them.

Commissioner Eddie Settle made a motion to approve the appointments of Donald Parker, James Motsinger, Dennis McGrady, Claude Shew, Jr., Benny S. Alexander, Jimmy Church, Toby Lee Speaks, Brenda Blake, and Dan Bumgarner to the Wilkes County Voluntary and Enhanced Agricultural District Board as requested and presented a tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – UPDATE – Chairman Elmore recognized John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Belvin said last month they briefly discussed the 75/25 and change in reimbursements for Medicaid. He added NC has been getting 75% reimbursement for Medicaid activity since 2014, through CMS (Center for Medicaid/Medicare). This year CMS requested justification from the state for the revenue and wanted more information. The State DHHS was unable to provide them the level of detail they wanted on billing from the 100 counties. Mr. Blevins said the state assumed CMS would allow them to test and give an answer later, this time the feds said no. He added the state give them their rules and they did the budget, now they are changing the rules based on this decision from the feds. They are filling out spreadsheets for the state to estimate their loss in revenue, but the state is still not sure where this will end up. At this time, they think they will lose \$124,000 to \$136,000 in one year, about \$11,000 per month less in revenue. Mr. Blevins said basically it will compress down to they can

only bill for the workers that determine eligibility for Medicaid and not for anyone that assist them or supplies, etc. They will do another test and monitor, if it changes he will let them know.

Mr. Blevins stated NC received \$15.4 million ARPA funds for FNS admin expenses. The state will give them 100% reimbursement for last month and this month up to \$77,159.71. At this time, it is 50% reimbursement for the workers. It will be extra reimbursing coming in. If they take the \$136,000 maximum they may lose in the 75/25 and subtract the \$77,159.71, they will be down about \$58,000 for the year. He added this is not good, but it will help to offset some of the loss. Mr. Blevins said they are half way through the REDA audit and still do not have any paybacks. He is very proud of them, they are working hard and doing a good job

Mr. Blevins provided the Commissioners with handouts for July. He briefly went over the monthly caseload report, Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial report. He also went through the CPS Foster Care monthly reports for July.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update.

MOTORSPORT RELIEF FUND DESIGN BUILD COMMITTEE – RECOMMENDATION – County Manager John Yates stated the Committee held a meeting and are recommending to proceed with contract negotiations with Choate Construction Company. Mr. Triplett added if the Board would like to accept the recommendation he has a motion to read.

Commissioner Eddie Settle made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Motorsport Relief Fund Design-Build Committee for the North Wilkesboro Speedway project that Choate Construction Company be selected as the design-builder for the project and that the County proceed with negotiations for a contract with Choate Construction Company. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT – ETJ MEMBER APPOINTMENT – Mr. Triplett stated before the Board is the Town of North Wilkesboro's recommendation to appoint Ronald Queen to a term as an ETJ Member on the North Wilkesboro Board of Adjustments. He added the way the new Chapter 160D works, this is the North Wilkesboro Board of Adjustments, but since this is the ETJ member they do not live in the town limits. The new statute and chapter 160D require the County Board of Commissioners make that appointment. He added they have a recommendation, but the member is their appointment to make. Mr. Triplett said as he noted last year the Town of Wilkesboro has not sent this for recommendation or approval. He added everyone has to adjust to 160D and this will take time. Mr. Triplett said he will be glad to follow up with Andrew Carlton and see where Wilkesboro is on their ETJ members.

Motion was made by Commissioner Eddie Settle to appoint Mr. Ronald Queen as the ETJ Member to the North Wilkesboro Board of Adjustments for a 3-year term to expire June 2025, as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and passed unanimously.

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SCHEDULED MEETINGS – CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR NOVEMBER 1, 2022 MEETING – Chairman Elmore stated they need to change the location of this meeting due to early voting. Mr. Yates replied the Ag Center Meeting room is available.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to move the location of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting scheduled on Tuesday, November 1, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. to the Wilkes County Agricultural Center located at 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, N.C. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Commissioner Brian S. Minton, seconded by Vice Chairman Casey Joe Johnson and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:03 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: September 20, 2022