



A Community Mental Health / Developmental Disabilities / Addictive Diseases Program

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

June 14, 2021 Via Teleconference

Members Present: David Ranieri, Sandra Gill, Damon Hoyte, Edwina Turner, Joseph Williams, Nancy Schroeder, Linda McElroy, Sherrell Terry, and Karen Johnson

Members Excused: April Hughes, Ed Harbison, and LaVerne Chaffin

Staff Present: Andrea Winston, Valerie Bowden, Denise Wade, Susan Gallagher, Cyndy Pattillo, and Molly Jones

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 3:31p.m. A quorum was established at that time. Board Chair David Ranieri welcomed Board members and staff.

For safety concerns during the Covid-19 pandemic, today's meeting is a teleconference call and, in accordance with the GACSB rules, will be recorded. Board members were made aware of this prior to the call and it was announced upon dialing in to the call. Molly did a roll call of Board members and staff participating on the call.

RECOGNITION OF GUEST(S) ATTENDING TODAY'S MEETING: No guests were in attendance.

*** SECRETARY'S MINUTES (Approval of May 10, 2021 minutes):** M/S/P Joseph Williams/Edwina Turner to approve the minutes of May 10, 2021 meeting, Board approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW: Valerie reported New Horizons had a surplus of \$146,949 for the month of April compared to a budget of \$33,575. This brings the year to date surplus to \$1,693,537 compared to a budget of \$530,373. There were no unusual items in April except that we continue to see the decline in DD Medicaid Waiver revenue as the Annex K DD Retainer billing has run out and there was no longer any DD Retainer Billing allowed after February 28, 2021.

We have also been able to exceed budget for the year due to DBHDD extending the timeframe that we are able to receive 1/12 of our GIA FFS allocated funds, which has now been extended to June. Revenues for the first 10 months of the current fiscal year are actually \$2,300,000 less than the first 10 months of last fiscal year. The planned expense reductions to address this shortfall, along with program operating expense being down with programs not operating at full capacity due to COVID, has helped the agency to exceed budget for the year. We continue to work on a FY22 budget that will assume the DBHDD 1/12 GIA FFS will end in June 2021 so that we can plan accordingly.

Days Cash on Hand at the end of May were 42.00 days. Revenue collections are down, but we have also been keeping expenses down and have been able to increase days cash on hand.

Andrea added that due to staffing shortages at all CSBs, causing some to cut services, discussion of some type of payment option to assist with hiring staff has been ongoing in the GACSB meetings.

MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES REOPENING PLANS - POST COVID UPDATE: Denise indicated that as we look at increasing the census at our Day Services programs and reopening safely, there are some common threads in all of the plans. The common threads are: staffing (staff shortage, lack of staff), transportation, and, potentially, space. The plans include continuing to stay safe, which means continuing to practice CDC prevention guidelines. Staff shortage and difficulty hiring, even receiving applications, is an ongoing concern that also includes drivers. Drivers are needed and the positions are posted. Since the last report presented in May, we have been able to hire one driver. Pre-COVID we were able to transport approximately 12 individuals on each van. Due to COVID, this number is reduced to 6 individuals per van. While there is a relaxation of some CDC guidelines, especially for those who have received vaccines, some individuals continue to be uncomfortable with the idea of being in groups.

Day Programs Status:

MH Day Services – REACH (Current average daily attendance is 50.)

- We have identified individuals who are ready and willing to return to F2F services at REACH.
- There is some limited capacity in the current groups.
- The plan is to add one group at the time. We are ready to add a group.
- As we continue to add groups back to the schedule, we will consider utilizing space at the BHP building.
- Update: We have selected someone for our Group Counselor/Group Leader position and are hopeful she will accept the position. This will enable us to add a group at REACH.
- Staff shortage continues to be a potential barrier to reopening as quickly as we would like.
- Transportation will be needed in order to support an increase in the census as we re-open.

SA Day Services – Midtown (Current average daily attendance is 35 – across all groups.)

- Midtown has identified several individuals who are ready and willing to return to F2F services at Midtown.
- We plan to add one group at the time. We are ready to add a group.
- There is a plan to increase the group size of the current groups, within safe limits as recommended by CDC. We do have some capacity at this time to increase group size.
- Telehealth (Zoom) group size will be increased.
- Our MAT Peer will conduct the F2F group that will be added.
- Update: We have added back groups that are available 5 hours per day.
- Keep the two tracks of groups that are currently in place (morning track and afternoon track).
- Staff shortage continues to be a barrier to reopening as quickly as we would like.
- As we continue to add groups, the plan is to consider utilizing space at the BHP building for an additional group.
- Transportation will be needed in order to support an increase in the census as we add groups. Staff have already been in touch with Transportation.

DD Columbus Service Center and Supported Employment Program

- Staff are in contact with families of our individuals as they attempt to identify individuals who are ready and willing to return to F2F services.
- Families are offered assistance in scheduling COVID-19 vaccines.
- Families are encouraged to ask questions and have been offered tours of the CSC and SEP to help them feel comfortable.
- There is a plan to increase group size in those groups where we currently have capacity.
- Staff shortage is a potential barrier to reopening as additional staff will be needed.
Update: A position has been posted.
- Transportation will be needed in order to support an increase in the census as we re-open.

DD Randolph/Clay Stewart/Quitman Service Center and Supported Employment Program

- Some semblance of normalcy has started to return to these programs. For example, the Annual Spring Fling was held and there were 20 individuals in attendance.
- Staff are in contact with families of our individuals as they attempt to identify individuals who are ready and willing to return to F2F services.
- Families are encouraged to ask questions and will be offered tours of the SC and SEP program so they can see what safety measures are being taken.
- We will first increase group size.
- Staff shortage is a potential barrier to reopening as additional staff will be needed.

Andrea reiterated that the work staff shortage is at a critical level at all CSBs, across the industry, and for all positions with some agencies limiting services due to the staff shortage. With so many positions open and other companies/agencies offering sign-on bonuses and higher salaries, filling positions and keeping staff is increasingly difficult. New Horizons is not able to be competitive with salaries and benefits while trying to achieve our goal of not operating in a deficit.

Board members inquired about open positions and salaries for those positions.

***APPROVAL OF GEORGIA HOUSING AND FINANCE AUTHORITY PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM GRANTS - SHELTER PLUS CARE IN MUSCOGEE & HARRIS COUNTIES, RED HILL, AND RURAL RAPID REHOUSING:**

Housing Program Grants that are up for renewal and require Board approval are listed below. Shelter Plus Care provides housing for homeless individuals in Muscogee and Harris counties, Red Hill group home is located in Stewart County, and Rural Rapid Rehousing provides housing in the outlying counties. Grant amounts are as follows:

- Shelter Plus Care Muscogee County \$323,855.00
- Shelter Plus Care Harris County Family \$227,329.00
- Shelter Plus Care Harris County Individual \$77,248.00
- Red Hill (Group Homes) \$58,951.00
- Rural Rapid Rehousing \$98,295.00

M/S/P Edwina Turner, Damon Hoyte to approve New Horizons participation in these supportive housing program grants, Board approved.

Sherrell Terry inquired about assistance for homeless individuals in Talbot County. Andrea indicated the Rural Rapid Rehousing program covers that area and staff could reach out to the individuals who are experiencing homelessness. One of the barriers to housing individuals is the definition of homelessness outlined in the grants. An individual is not considered homeless, by their definition, if they are staying with family or friends. Edwina Turner added that homelessness in the rural areas is very different from urban areas which makes it difficult to get an accurate count of homeless individuals in outlying areas or provide assistance to them.

STRATEGIC PLAN: We have updated the FY21 Strategic Plan for the 3rd quarter progress activity. A copy was sent to Board members for review. The majority of the goals are on track and the goals with little activity are lagging due to COVID restrictions right now. We are reviewing the Strategic Plan in Staff Executive Committee meetings and Performance Improvement Committee meetings to ensure that we are staying on track to meet the Strategic Plan goals.

GEORGIA HOUSING VOUCHER FIDELITY REVIEW: NHBH volunteered to be a part of the pilot Fidelity Review for the Georgia Housing Voucher Program. Denise reported the Fidelity Review was conducted Monday, May 17 and, prior to the actual review, requested documents were sent to DBHDD. The fidelity score was 22.92 (passing score is 21) and our general organizational index score was 46 (passing score is 45), both passing scores. Mr. Seay of DBHDD pointed out that it unusual to receive a passing score in both fidelity and organizational index. He also stated that the NHBH Team “did an exceptional job.” Mr. Seay indicated that a number of New Horizons’ practices will be used as a standard in some areas, as the DBHDD Team deemed these practices as being worth sharing with other providers.

As with all reviews and audits, there were some suggestions made for improvements. Three areas were identified as needing some work: individualized treatment plans, documentation of supervision of staff and process monitoring. We will be working to address these areas and make the suggested improvements. Additionally, the DBHDD Team suggested that we enter or scan the GHVP documents (Housing Choice Logs, leases, etc.) into the EMR.

Kudos to Cheryl Williams and our GHVP Team!

Congratulations were extended by Board Members for a great job on the review.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AWARDS: Susan announced the Community Reinvestment Department of the Columbus Consolidated Government has awarded (2) grants to New Horizons Behavioral Health through their “Public Services” Funding. New Horizons will receive \$32,000 to fund a Wheelchair-Accessible Minivan for its I/DD Program and \$7,500 to fund bedroom furniture for GHFA Permanent Supported Housing units in Muscogee County. Both of these programs support the City’s Consolidated Plan by serving low income individuals in special populations.

Public services can strengthen communities by addressing the needs of specific populations, and by supporting economic development. Through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the Columbus Consolidated Government funds an array of public services, including, but not limited to:

- Childcare
- Health care
- Job Training and workforce development
- Recreation programs
- Homebuyer counseling
- Elderly care and programs
- Homeless services
- Education programs

Within the City of Columbus, there continues to be a need for services to increase the effectiveness of physical investments that improve conditions for the elderly, youth, low-income persons, and other special populations. As identified by the City's current Consolidated Plan, these are the identified public service’s needs for Columbus:

- Expanded recreational and education programming for youth, especially STEM activities
- Entrepreneurship and employment training programs
- Emergency and employment training programs
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- Homebuyer education and foreclosure prevention services
- Improved mental health services
- Substance abuse prevention education and rehabilitation services

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE SURVEY ACTION PLAN: To gain input from staff, New Horizons annually participates in this survey conducted through the GACSB. Surveys are completed electronically. Cyndy reported on a couple of areas, pay and benefits and comparisons with Healthcare Staffing and New Horizons benefits/policies, that reflected staff dissatisfaction. Some positive areas of response included working well with co-workers, knowing the mission of New Horizons and who we are here to serve, having adequate space and what you need to do your job. The report of survey results compares New Horizons to other CSBs throughout the state. A committee was formed to address areas of concern and an action plan developed. The plan will be reviewed with the Performance Improvement Committee and staff assigned to implement the plan.

Andrea added that the agency conducts CARF required surveys for Stakeholders, Individuals Served, and Employees annually.

CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINIC UPDATE: Cyndy reported CCBHC committee members continue to participate in the weekly Learning Community sessions focusing on requirements to being a CCBHC in great detail. Committee members are then meeting to develop goals and staff assignments for those goals. To become a CCBHC, providers must meet certain criteria and payment for services is closely tied to costs of services. Streamlining how we operate, both in service delivery and financially, will be key. The current hiring situation will make the transition process more challenging. We are looking at grant opportunities related to becoming a CCBHC.

DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS: The Facebook Live Show with Pops Barnes is on hiatus for several weeks, with plans to return later this summer. New Horizons’ advertisements for the MAT Program and Child and Adolescent Services are running on WTVM through July. A Suicide Awareness Conversation with 20 youth & adults was conducted at the Salvation Army on Saturday, June 12th. Staff from ESG & RRH programs will participate in the Clay County Juneteenth event in Ft. Gaines.

COVID SURVEILLANCE REPORT: As of today, June 14, 2021 the agency has not had any new reports of either COVID-19 exposures nor positive cases since April 21, 2021 (current data below). The agency hosted 2 COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics on May 12 and May 14, 2021.

Updated Coronavirus Cases – (260)

As of today June 14, 2021:

1. Known # individuals exposed to the COVID-19 virus: **115** (0 new exposures) reporting individual exposures to DBHDD is no longer required unless it is the I\DD program.
2. Known # staff exposed to the COVID-19 virus: **62** (0 new exposures); reporting staff exposures to DBHDD is no longer required.
3. Known # individuals with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19 virus: **38** (0 new cases).
4. Known # staff with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19 virus: **44** (0 new cases).

COVID-19 related Deaths: **2**

Andrea also presented the following data from the Department of Public Health:
State of Georgia: 35% have been fully vaccinated.

County	Covid Positives since 02/01/2020	Covid Positive in the first week of June 2021	Percent Vaccinated
Muscogee	14740	76	25%
Chattahoochee	3620	3	11%
Clay	186	1	33%
Quitman	81	0	23%
Randolph	475	2	26%
Harris	2238	7	27%
Talbot	400	8	29%
Stewart	830	6	22%

With only 35% of Georgians fully vaccinated and many counties with much lower numbers, getting the word out and continuing to encourage people to get vaccinated is critically important. As the numbers indicate, people are still getting Covid-19.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS: Board members expressed shock at the low numbers for fully vaccinated individuals in their counties and emphasized there is more work to do to get the word out. They shared information on family members, milestones reached, changes in their work environments, and efforts to follow guidelines and stay safe while having a little more freedom to gather in small groups due to being fully vaccinated. New Horizons' staff also gave updates. All are looking forward to the in-person Board meeting on August 9th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Andrea reminded Board Members that there is no Board meeting scheduled for July. The GACSB Annual Educational Exchange is typically in October, but this year will be held November 7-9, which will conflict with the November 8th Board Meeting date. As we typically have not had a meeting in October due to this event, Board members were asked if they would prefer to have an October meeting this year and cancel the November meeting to allow them to attend the Exchange. Members agreed to cancelling the November meeting and having a meeting in October.

Andrea reported a meeting was held with the Muscogee County Sheriffs Department to discuss implementing a Co-Responder Program allowing a Counselor to go out on calls that are related to a mental health crisis.

A meeting was held with Piedmont Medical Center to discuss a referral process to New Horizons for individuals who present at the Emergency Room for opioid overdoses.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Karen Johnson asked if services were ongoing at the Villa Nova location in Randolph County. She reported being told that only two staff remain employed there, there was too much work there for two people, and asked if we planned to continue to provide services at that location. Andrea assured her that all services would continue at the location and she would be happy to speak with staff or individuals who shared this information and would discuss it with the Program Director for that area. She will contact Ms. Johnson when more information is available.

Members were reminded there is no Board Meeting in July and the August meeting will be in-person/teleconference.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, M/S/P Damon Hoyte/Nancy Schroeder to adjourn the teleconference/meeting at 4:50 p.m., Board approved.

David Ranieri
Chairperson