



*A Community Mental Health / Developmental Disabilities / Addictive Diseases Program*

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

September 13, 2021      Via Teleconference

Members Present:      David Ranieri, Edwina Turner, Damon Hoyte,  
April Hughes, LaVerne Chaffin, and Karen Johnson

Members Excused:      Sandra Gill, Ed Harbison, Joseph Williams, Nancy Schroeder,  
Linda McElroy, and Sherrell Terry

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

**CALL TO ORDER:**      The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m.      A quorum was not established at that time, but was established later in the meeting.      Board Chair David Ranieri welcomed Board members and staff.

Today's meeting was originally scheduled as an in-person/teleconference option per Board approval. Due to DBHDD and GACSB having recent cancellations of trainings and conferences and with Covid numbers increasing in many areas, it was decided that today's meeting would be a teleconference call and, in accordance with the GACSB rules, will be recorded. Board members were notified of the change and it was announced upon dialing in to the call that the meeting would be recorded. A decision will be made about the October Board meeting at a later date. Molly did a roll call of Board members and staff participating on the call.

**RECOGNITION OF GUEST(S) ATTENDING TODAY'S MEETING:**      Laura Lee Bernstein, Chattahoochee County Manager.

**\* SECRETARY'S MINUTES (Approval of August 9, 2021 minutes):**      M/S/P Damon Hoyte/ Karen Johnson to approve the minutes of August 9, 2021 meeting, Board approved.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW:** Valerie reported New Horizons had a surplus of \$22,944 for the month of July compared to a budget of \$21,932. There were no unusual items in July. This is the first month that we are not receiving 1/12 of our GIA FFS allocated funds each month and we will only receive payment for services that we bill for, which has greatly reduced our monthly revenue. And, there are no provisions for the DD waiver billing in the new fiscal year. Based on current activity, we projected what we would be billing for GIA FFS and DD Medicaid Waiver in order to ensure that we can meet our monthly expenses. For the month of July, we did meet the projected GIA FFS billing and DD Medicaid Waiver billing. We are now operating on a thin margin and continue to review programs and look at ways that we can operate more efficiently so that we can continue to increase our cash position and not decrease cash. We are still working on a final budget for the year.

Days Cash on Hand at the end of August were 46.00 days.

Andrea added that funding for Transportation continues to be discussed with the latest information indicating that New Horizons opted out of Coordinated Transportation years ago due to the demands and costs of participating in the program. The question now is can we opt back in or can we use a current provider for our transportation needs? Cutting programs that can not support themselves will be necessary to meet our goal of increasing Days Cash on Hand by one day per month. She emphasized that difficult times require difficult decisions.

**\* APPROVAL OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT:** 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 \$32,500 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. Seeking Board approval of the Community Development Block Grant to fund a Minivan for I/DD programs. M/S/P Damon Hoyte/Karen Johnson to approve the \$32,500 Block Grant funding, Board approved.

**ESG GRANT UPDATE:** New Horizons currently has 3 Emergency Services Grants (ESG grants) through the Department of Community Affairs (DCA):

ESG Homeless Prevention

ESG Street Outreach

ESG Hotel Motel Voucher Project

We have not been able to meet the enrollment requirement of the ESG Homeless Prevention and ESG Street Outreach and, therefore, will not be renewing these two grants. One significant barrier to enrolling individuals in these two programs is the inability to meet the definition of homeless as defined by DCA. We do encounter persons who are living on couches of family members and need assistance, but they do not meet the criteria.

We will be renewing the ESG Hotel Motel Voucher Project for \$5,000.00.

**RECOVERY MONTH ACTIVITIES:** Recovery on the River was held Saturday, September 11th at Synovus Park located at 1100 Bay Avenue on the RiverWalk in Uptown Columbus. The purpose of the event was to bring awareness to the local recovery community. We had 18 volunteers, 6 speakers, 2 Sheriff's Department Security Staff, and 77 attendees. A total of \$7,700 was raised. Expenses were \$2,245.93 resulting in net proceeds of \$5,454.07. Logistically, the event was much easier to organize than the 5K Run4Recovery and Uptown Promenade, yet netted a decent amount of proceeds. It was also much smaller than the 2019 Run4Recovery which had a total of 239 participants with the Run, Walk and volunteers. A breakdown of Recovery events from 2016 to present is listed below:

2016	\$ 5,740.18	(Run4Recovery)
2017	\$ 8,144.25	(Run4Recovery)
2018	\$ 3,146.75	(Run4Recovery)
2019	\$ 9,373.12	(Run4Recovery)
2020	\$ 2,604.92	(Recovery Rocks)
2021	\$ 5,454.07	(Recovery on the River)

Feedback from the event has been very positive. The weather and location were great, the crowd small and manageable. We followed Covid protocols for outdoor events and encouraged face masks. The Development Office is selling the remaining t-shirts at \$10 each to close out the event. The website Photo Gallery has been updated with a few pictures from the event.

**CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER UPDATE:** Cyndy posed the question "What is a CCBHC?" and gave the following definition: The Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Act demonstration established a federal definition and criteria for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). These entities, a new provider type in Medicaid, are designed to provide a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use disorder services to vulnerable individuals. In return, CCBHCs receive an enhanced Medicaid reimbursement rate based on their anticipated costs of expanding services to meet the needs of these complex populations. CCBHCs are non-profit organizations or units of a local government behavioral health authority. They must directly provide (or contract with partner organizations to provide) nine types of services, with an emphasis on the provision of 24-hour crisis care, evidence-based practices, care coordination with local primary care and hospital partners, and integration with physical health care. Requirements include: 24/7/365 mobile crisis team services, immediate screening and risk assessment, easy access to care, tailored care for active duty military and veterans, expanded care coordination with local primary care providers, commitment to peers and family, and treatment services for individuals with I/DD. The CCBHC model promises payment for the actual cost of services. There are two models of payment: 1) One payment per month per individual served, or 2) Payment per service provided (for covered services). It is unknown whether NHBH will choose the model or the state will choose a model for all providers. Extensive cost analysis will be required, followed by a major leap of faith. Current areas of focus are: Access, policies and procedures, and care coordination. Cyndy added that while much has been learned about CCBHCs, there are still many questions, like what will services for the I/DD population look like? Andrea added that a huge undertaking will be selecting a new, enhanced Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system that is required for CCBHC and we currently are looking at Netsmart and Qualifacts. The initial start up for Netsmart is \$250,000 and \$300,000 annually.

Our IT department is meeting with Qualifacts this week to gather more information about their system and related costs. Streamlining our systems with a more advanced EMR could result in reduction of staff that would offset some of the costs. DBHDD will submit an RFP opportunity for two CCBHCs and Federal funds through SAMHSA will provide additional opportunities in Georgia. Updated CCBHC information will be provided to the Board as it becomes available.

**P.A.T.H. PROGRAM AWARD:** Andrea announced that New Horizons' PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) Team has been selected as a finalist for a Regional Outstanding Behavioral Health Provider Award for Region 6. These awards recognize DBHDD providers that have demonstrated exceptional performance and service. The award announcements will occur during the 2021 Behavioral Health Symposium which will be conducted virtually this year via Zoom.

PATH Director, Virginia Cartwright, reported PATH is designed to assist individuals with mental health and/or addictive disease, who are experiencing homelessness or currently in danger of becoming homeless (imminent risk of homeless). Imminent Risk of homeless consists of having to depart from where an individual resides due to eviction or a family member or friend demanding you leave. If this is the case, the individual is required to bring in a notarized letter from the person requesting their departure.

PATH case managers work with individuals in the program to locate permanent stable housing within the community. PATH works with many other community partners and agencies that also provide housing assistance. PATH is currently a member of our local Continuum of Care (CoC) spearheaded by Home for Good/United Way. Through community networking and street outreach, PATH has gained a wealth of knowledge and resources to assist individuals in obtaining stable housing.

PATH was recently able to assist a homeless female receive mental health treatment, wrap-around services, and temporary housing through the CoC. This individual was first spotted by the local CoC, but they were not able to outreach her. She was on the Mayor's list of individuals who are homeless that citizens expressed their concern about. Mrs. Winston went a step further after noticing her on several different occasions while driving to and from work. She reached out to PATH to see if we could assist her. PATH conducted several outreach attempts to reach the individual, but she declined. On our last attempt, the sheriff's department joined us, along with a Licensed Clinical Counselor and we were able to work together to get her to The Bradley Center for crisis stabilization. From there she was able to get stable on her meds, wrap-around services were implemented, and temporary housing was established. She currently has an Intensive Case Manager, is on her medication, and is also receiving services from Veterans Affairs.

PATH is not designed to provide emergency or immediate housing, but this program was set up to assist and provide resources and linkage to individuals so that they are able to secure services to prevent them from getting in the same situation again.

**\*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:** It is time, once again, for annual employee evaluations. Ms. Winston's Performance Evaluation was sent to Board Members prior to the meeting along with a stamped, addressed envelope to return it by mail. Board Members were asked to complete the evaluation, sign in two places, and send it to Shannon Robertson in Human Resources. If questions on completing the form or for more information, they were instructed to contact Shannon by phone or email. Andrea requested a brief Executive Session at the next Board meeting to further discuss her performance as she welcomes Board feedback and so appreciates the dedication and serious role Board members display in serving New Horizons. Mr. Ranieri encouraged Board Members to review and complete the evaluation form, sign it, and return by mail.

**DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS:** Susan reported that New Horizons has 3135 followers on Facebook. The Facebook Live Show with Pops Barnes is on hiatus and will return September 20 with a pre-recorded Zoom show featuring New Horizons programs. Our ads for the MAT Program and Child and Adolescent Services were aired on WTVM through August and Recovery on the River was featured on Business Break on August 31. We have scheduled small Outreach and Education events at the Parks and Recreations Centers and Senior Centers throughout the year with one location highlighted each month. Due to Covid, attendance at the Recreation Centers is very limited. The Development Office will use the opportunity to place program brochures at the Centers where they may be seen by parents picking up and dropping off their children at the Community Schools Program.

Pops Barnes has arranged for us to tape a 30 second spot promoting Integrated Healthcare with Tree of Life Healthcare on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to make CCG City Council aware of New Horizons and Tree of Life Healthcare, Inc. and to include our organizations in the allotment of the Indigent Care Trust Fund when Council votes on the apportionment in 2022.

Our partnership with the Sexual Assault Center at 909 continues by providing outreach and education to their volunteers on the overlap of Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders. The next training is October 23. There are usually 10 volunteers in attendance.

We continue to provide Suicide Awareness Training to the community even though the DBHDD Mental Health Awareness Training grant has expired. The next training is via Google Meetings for the staff and volunteers of the Boys and Girls Clubs, Inc. on Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM. This training is coordinated through our partners at the Family Center.

The Development Director will be at the Talbot County Community Roundtable event Saturday, September 25. We will be prepared to speak on county services and provide brochures to attendees.

September is National Recovery Month and National Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month. October 24-31 is Red Ribbon Week in the schools. (Youth Substance Abuse Prevention)

**COVID SURVEILLANCE REPORT:****Federal Mandates**

On this past Thursday, President Biden indicated that he was enacting a federal mandate requiring companies with more than 100 employees to [vaccinate](#) workers against the coronavirus or test them weekly. Federal workers and contractors are also included in this mandate. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said he and other [Republican](#) governors are "strategizing" on how to push back against Covid vaccine mandates announced yesterday by [President Biden](#), and that his state is "looking into all legal options." So how this impacts the organization remains to be seen at this time. Board Members will be kept updated as to how this develops over time as we will follow the guidelines for Georgia.

Andrea indicated she will provide an update on the latest vaccination and Covid numbers during our next board meeting, however, wanted to share that New Horizons lost our first team member to Covid two weeks ago and many in the organization have been deeply impacted.

**Vaccine Leave Time**

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp announced in August that Monday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, in conjunction with the Labor Day Holiday weekend, would be a vaccine holiday to encourage state employees to get vaccinated or to thank those that had already done so. After much consideration of how a 4 day closure would affect our individuals and how it would also financially impact the organization, we developed an alternative that was in keeping with the governor's request. We offered all staff time off during regular hours to get vaccinated, and we are also planning a series of wellness clinics to offer the Covid vaccines, and the Influenza vaccines this fall. This will be offered in partnership with our pharmacy, Genoa.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Andrea announced that Board Member Linda McElroy's mother is in ICU at Piedmont Medical and our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

The GACSB Annual Educational Exchange is November 7-9 at Legacy Lodge on Lake Lanier Islands, Georgia. A block of rooms has been reserved and those interested in attending should let us know as soon as possible. As with all conferences and trainings scheduled at this time, plans are subject to change and Board Members will be notified should this occur.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mr. Ranieri reminded Board Members to complete Ms. Winston's Performance Evaluation and return it by mail. He expressed concern for Ms. McElroy's mother and hope for her recovery and sadness over the recent loss of a New Horizons employee.

An inquiry was made concerning New Horizons procedures following the death of an employee. Ms. Winston responded that it is really based on the family's needs. Depending on their needs, flowers and/or food are most often provided.

A determination will be made for either in person, teleconference, or a hybrid option prior to the October Board meeting and Board Members will be notified.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, M/S/P Karen Johnson/LaVerne Chaffin to adjourn the teleconference/meeting at 4:41 p.m., Board approved.

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David Ranieri  
Chairperson