



A Community Mental Health / Developmental Disabilities / Addictive Diseases Program

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

April 12, 2021 Via Teleconference

Members Present: David Ranieri, Damon Hoyte, Sandra Gill, Joseph Williams,
 Nancy Schroeder, and Edwina Turner

Members Excused: April Hughes, Ed Harbison, LaVerne Chaffin, Karen Johnson,
 Linda McElroy, and Sherrell Terry

Staff Present: Andrea Winston, Valerie Bowden, Denise Wade,
 Susan Gallagher, Gloria Mott, and Molly Jones

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. A quorum was established at that time. Board Chair David Ranieri welcomed Board members and staff.

For safety concerns during 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 Jones did a roll call of Board members and staff participating in the call.

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

*** SECRETARY’S MINUTES (Approval of February 8, 2021 minutes):** M/S/P Joseph Williams/Damon Hoyte to approve the minutes of February 8, 2021 meeting, Board approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW: Valerie reported New Horizons had a surplus of \$81,852 for the month of February compared to a budget of \$40,262. This brings the year to date surplus to \$1,426,340 compared to a budget of \$456,536. There were no unusual items in February 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 is 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. When we developed the budget, we did not know yet if it had been extended beyond June 2020. We are still able to provide and be reimbursed for Medicaid and insurance services providing services via telephone, facetime, zoom, telemedicine, etc., and, of course, downsizing our program sites has greatly helped to reduce expenses.

Revenues for the first 8 months of the current fiscal year are actually \$2,232,000 less than the first 8 months of last fiscal year. The planned expense reductions to address this shortfall, along with program operating expense being down due to programs not operating at full capacity due to Covid-19, has helped the agency to exceed budget for the year.

Days Cash on Hand at the end of March were 39.00 days. Revenue collections are down, but we have also been keeping expenses down and have been able to increase days cash on hand.

*** NEW HORIZONS ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT:** We are required by DBHDD policy to change auditors for our annual Financial Audit every 5 years. We have been with Robert Baker and Associates for 5 years now. Due to the current Covid-19 environment the audit is conducted primarily remotely with some onsite time. If we start with another audit firm at this time, there would more than likely need to be more onsite time as we are oriented with the new audit firm and they are oriented with us. If we can continue with Robert Baker and Associates for another year, it would make the audit process much smoother during this pandemic.

We have requested from DBHDD to continue with the current auditor for another year and they have approved. We would also like to have Board approval to remain with the current auditors for another year. M/S/P Joseph Williams/Damon Hoyte to approve continuing with the current auditor, Robert Baker and Associates, for another year, Board approved.

MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE / USDA TELEHEALTH GRANT: Susan expressed thanks to Ms. Winston for making the connection with Morehouse happen and to all the staff who attend the virtual weekly grant meetings with Morehouse staff, particularly Gloria Mott, Director of Nursing Services and Randall Newberry, Director of IT Services.

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), awarded a new Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant to the Morehouse School of Medicine, "Georgia Digital Framework of Health Equity." The Distance Learning Program provides financial assistance to enable and improve distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas. DLT grant funds support the use of telecommunications-enabled information, audio and video equipment, and related advanced technologies by students, teachers, medical professionals, and rural residents. The grant is intended to increase rural access to education, training, and health care resources that are otherwise unavailable or limited in scope.

Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) in collaboration with New Horizons Behavioral Health (NH) applied for funds to purchase eligible telecommunications and telemedicine equipment under the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant to implement the **Georgia Digital Framework of Health Equity.**

The Georgia Digital Framework of Health Equity is an informal metro-rural healthcare intervention and education consortium. It intends to create a robust digital flow of treatment, healthcare peer-mentoring, and workforce training to eliminate health disparities caused by geographic locations, population density, and economic conditions. It addresses health equity through telemedicine and distance learning infrastructures, telehealth training programs, and shared healthcare resources. Its ultimate goal is to improve quality of life, reduced rate and severity of diseases, and increased access to treatment for rural Georgians.

As a telemedicine and telehealth education network in 9 most rural counties in Georgia, the project focuses on **(I) Telemedicine: Treatment & Consultation** and the corresponding **(II) TeleHealth: Education and Training** in a holistic rural resident health engagement model, i.e. at the *Clinic Level*, at the *Community Level*, and at the *School Level*.

Telemedicine: Treatment & Consultation services highlight behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, intervention and management through the *TelePsych* program; and Family Medicine; chronic disease treatment and management; identification and treatment of COVID-19; and specialty referrals through the *TeleClinic* program. Both the *TelePsych* and *TeleClinic* programs will be offered at traditional established medical clinics to augment existing services, but these services will also be offered at identified school and community centers.

TeleHealth: Education & Training also at the *Clinic Level*, the *Community Level* and the *School Level* highlight behavioral health and substance abuse education and training including Grand Rounds and Continuing Medical Education (CME) for local health professionals; identification and management of chronic and/or emerging health issues (such as diabetes, HIV or sickle cell) including Covid-19; High School & Youth Adult Community Health Worker Competency Virtual Training; and Healthcare Career Development Tele-Shadowing.

MSM and NH estimate that through this expansion of telemedicine services and telehealth education, 78,628 rural residents will have access to telemedicine and health education programming. The project will tackle health disparities in rural Georgia in a systemic way and change lives.

Morehouse School of Medicine partnered with New Horizons Behavioral Health for rural telemedicine services as well as the Stewart Webster Rural Health Clinic – Richland, GA; LifeBrite Community Hospital – Blakely, GA; and Alamo Medical Clinic – a CareConnect facility located in Alamo, GA.

Other partners in the consortium include: Zion Hope Baptist Church, Blakely-Maddox Memorial Library, Randolph Clay Library, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School, Greenville High School, Hancock Central Middle & High Schools, Early County High School, and Wheeler County Elementary and High Schools.

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Total funds awarded to Morehouse School of Medicine for telemedicine and distance learning equipment is \$ 1,146,793 with New Horizons Behavioral Health awarded \$ 277,713.57. There is a 15% matching requirement that MSM is covering for all partners in the project.

New Horizons, 2100 Comer Avenue	Mobile Telehealth Cart	\$ 46,996.00
New Horizons, 2100 Comer Avenue	Integrated Distance Learning Room	\$ 57,422.33
Randolph Clay Service Center	Real Presence Utility Cart & Peripherals	\$ 43,323.81
Randolph Substance Abuse Recovery Center	Real Presence Utility Cart & Peripherals	\$ 43,323.81
Stewart Quitman Service Center	Real Presence Utility Cart & Peripherals	\$ 43,323.81
Talbot County Harmon Center	Real Presence Utility Cart & Peripherals	\$ 43,323.81
		\$ 277,713.57

Morehouse will be conducting an all-partner Consortium virtual meeting near the end of April. Morehouse has hired a program manager and will be responsible for acquiring all the digital equipment outlined in the grant proposal. Our IT Team will be involved in coordinating the installation process. New Horizons will be having internal team meetings with key project staff starting April 13th through implementation.

STEWART COUNTY SERVICES: During the downsizing caused by the pandemic, I/DD services at Stewart-Quitman Service Center were relocated to the Randolph-Clay Service Center building. The building in Stewart County has been used for mental health services since that time and, starting in May, those services will be provided in the Stewart County Health Department building. Gloria reported that currently intake, counseling, and medication management mental health services are available the third Tuesday of each month either face-to-face or via telehealth. With the grant opportunities available through our partnership with Morehouse, we hope to offer more extensive, integrated services in the future to the Stewart County community.

NHEAT FUND REPORT: To meet some of our individual’s basic needs of day-to-day life, the NHEAT fund was developed in 1998. The fund is an organized way that New Horizons employees can financially assist individuals, through charitable donations, with unmet needs and improve their quality of life. Persons or agencies outside of our employee base can also contribute to the fund. The NHEAT fund has three areas of focus: Charitable/Medical, Education, and CARE. To be eligible for Charitable/Medical funds, individuals must be enrolled in New Horizons services for at least six months and maintain treatment compliance. Exceptions may be made for those unable to pay for medications after their initial appointment (Example: Hospital discharges). Based on fund availability and needs, assistance may be provided for medications, eyeglasses, food or clothing, some healthcare services and equipment, transportation, and rent or utility assistance. Employees and individuals in services can apply for NHEAT Educational Funds that assist with tuition, fees, and/or books. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. The NHEAT Care Fund is designated for employees who have undergone a catastrophic event. Employees can submit NHEAT requests electronically on the Intranet. The annual NHEAT campaign kicks off in October, followed by NHEAT week in November when donations cards should be submitted. Participation ranges from 70 to 100%.

Employee pledges can be a one-time donation or a monthly payroll deduction, are tax-deductible, and are completely voluntary. Annually, assistance is provided to over 300 individuals with the majority receiving help with medications. For the first quarter of 2021, assistance has been provided in the following areas with the number assisted in parentheses: Metra Bus Passes (11), Utilities (14), Rent Assistance (5), Medication (42), Groceries (2), Education – Staff (1), Eyeglasses (1), and Hearing Aid (1) for a total of 77 individuals receiving NHEAT assistance during the quarter. New Horizons employees are dedicated, supportive, and take great pride in the NHEAT fund. Our individuals are very appreciative and grateful for the generosity of New Horizons employees and the assistance provided by the fund.

STATE OF GEORGIA BONUSES: Andrea reported that on February 15th, 2021 Governor Brian Kemp announced an amendment to the operating budget for the State that would include a bonus for all full-time State employees making less than \$80,000 per year. The bonus comes as a result of the pandemic and the ensuing burden that it has caused State employees. As most of you realize, half of our workforce is employed by New Horizons and the other half by HealthCare staffing. While we applaud the governor's efforts to reward our dedicated staff with this monetary gift, the governor's budget for the bonuses did not include provisions for our HCS team members. Andrea continued that her desire would be to reward everybody equally, but additional compensation funded by New Horizons is not an option at this time. With many unknowns ahead, we must be prudent and financially responsible to weather what lies ahead. Board members asked if other alternatives had been considered for HCS staff and Andrea acknowledged that a number of options have been discussed. With a focus on one team, rather than two, keeping morale up, and valuing all staff, we hope to be able to provide some incentive to HCS staff in the future.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REVIEW/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH QUALITY REVIEW: IPS Supported Employment is an evidence-based approach to supported employment for people who have a mental illness. IPS stands for Individual Placement and Support. Denise reported that our yearly monitoring Fidelity Review was held remotely February 23rd. On the 25 item Fidelity scale with a possible score of 125, we received a score of 106, up 2 from our last review. The Behavioral Health Quality Review was done remotely April 5th through 7th. Our Billing Validation score was 87 (the same as previous review), and our overall score was 86%. With a required score of 85% for KPI standards, we remain on track for yearly reviews and improvement in our KPI scores. Denise thanked staff and the Board for their leadership to ensure we maintain quality services and care to those we serve.

DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE: Susan reported to the Board that New Horizons has implemented a 4-week media campaign through WTVM for the MAT-SOR Medication-Assisted Treatment Program for Opioid Use Disorders. We will be tracing enrollment in the program to determine the success of the campaign. 30-second ads are running at various times throughout the day. Denise Wade McLeod taped a Business Break segment that will air April 13th. We are also linked in to the WTVM website and Facebook page with a direct link to the NHBH website that provides enrollment and eligibility information on MAT-SOR.

As more people are vaccinated and Covid-19 safety precautions are eased, more Health and Wellness events are being scheduled in our communities. Randolph County will host a drive through Health Fair on Saturday April 24. River Valley Regional Commission is hosting a drive through event on Friday, May 7th.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2021 Community Mental Health Centers (Short Title: CMHC) grant program. The purpose of this program is to enable community mental health centers to **support and restore the delivery of clinical services that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic** and effectively address the needs of individuals with serious emotional disturbance (SED), serious mental illness (SMI), and individuals with SMI or SED and substance use disorders, referred to as co-occurring disorder (COD). SAMHSA recognizes the needs of individuals with behavioral health conditions, including minority populations and economically disadvantaged communities, have not been met during the pandemic and that CMHC staff and other caregivers have been impacted. Applications are due May 21. Funding is based on numbers served and ranges from \$500,000 to \$2,500,000 per year for up to two years. SAMHSA estimates 165 to 825 awards will be funded.

COVID SURVEILLANCE REPORT/COVID STAFFING: Andrea reported the following Covid-19 numbers:

Updated Coronavirus Cases – (255)

As of today April 12, 2021:

1. Known # individuals exposed to the COVID-19 virus: **117** (2 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: **64** (1 new); reporting staff exposures to DBHDD is no longer required.
3. Known # individuals with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19 virus: **35** (2 new cases).
4. Known # staff with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19 virus: **42** (2 new cases).

COVID-19 related Deaths: **1**

For our eight county area, numbers are:

County	Positive Cases	Deaths
Muscogee	15730	430
Talbot	470	17
Harris	2486	57
Clay	239	3
Quitman	162	2
Stewart	881	23
Chattahoochee	2754	68
Randolph	626	33

Andrea added that Georgia is lagging behind in vaccinations with 28% of the population having received one dose and 15% being fully vaccinated. For the vaccine locator, go to dph.georgia.gov. Board members inquired about the number of New Horizons staff that have been vaccinated. Andrea responded that we can only encourage staff and individuals to get the vaccine, they are not required to get the vaccine or report it.

Denise reported on challenges the agency has faced in Residential programs during the pandemic. For homes with individuals with a confirmed positive Covid-19 test, recruiting staff from other programs, offering supplemental pay, and of course, PPE for each shift has been necessary to maintain staff needed at sites. A gift of appreciation was presented to several staff who were willing to go above and beyond in working extra hours to ensure all shifts were covered.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS: Board members shared information on how they, their families, and communities are managing the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Many reported they are now fully vaccinated and emphasized that, as community leaders, feel it is important to set an example for others. All are looking forward to being able to have an in-person Board meeting in the future when guidelines permit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: David thanked Mr. Hoyte for filling in during the February meeting in his absence and to New Horizons leadership for reports/information presented in that meeting.

Board Members extended thanks to New Horizons leadership, staff, and fellow Board members for the great job they are doing, especially during these challenging times.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were presented.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, M/S/P Joseph Williams/Edwina Turner to adjourn the teleconference/meeting at 4:36 p.m., Board approved.

David Ranieri
Chairperson