



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

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

February 8, 2021                      Via Teleconference

Members Present:                      Damon Hoyte, April Hughes, Joseph Williams,  
LaVerne Chaffin, Linda McElroy, and Karen Johnson

Members Excused:                      David Ranieri, Ed Harbison, Sandra Gill, Nancy Schroeder,  
Edwina Turner, and Sherrell Terry

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

**CALL TO ORDER:**     The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m.     A quorum was not established at that time, but was established later in the meeting.     Board Member Damon Hoyte presided over the meeting in Board Chair David Ranieri's absence.     Mr. Hoyte 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:**     Mac Moyer, Stewart County Manager.

**\* SECRETARY'S MINUTES (Approval of January 11, 2021 minutes):**     M/S/P Joseph Williams/Linda McElroy to approve the minutes of January 11, 2021 meeting, Board approved.

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**FINANCIAL REVIEW:** Valerie reported New Horizons had a surplus of \$345,544 for the month of December compared to a budget of \$109,969. This brings the year to date surplus to \$1,150,753 compared to a budget of \$333,659. The pharmacy transition to Genoa Pharmacy took place on December 7. Part of the transition involved Genoa buying New Horizons pharmacy inventory, so we had a large credit for pharmaceutical expense for December and we also still had some pharmacy revenue due to collections on pharmacy receivables. The pharmacy actually incurred a surplus of \$156,294 for the month of December, which greatly added to the surplus for the agency for the month. 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 March. When we developed the budget we did not know yet if it had been extended beyond June 2020. And, we are still able to provide and be reimbursed for Medicaid and insurance services, offering services via telephone, facetime, zoom, telemedicine, etc. so Medicaid is also exceeding budget projections. Of course, downsizing our program sites has greatly helped to reduce expenses.

Revenues for the first 6 months of the current fiscal year are actually \$2,089,259 less than the first 6 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 has helped the agency to exceed budget for the year.

Days Cash on Hand at the end of January were 36.00 days compared to 32 days in December. Revenue collections are down, but we have also been keeping expenses down and were able to increase days cash on hand.

Board members congratulated staff on the financial progress made during the past year.

**CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTERS (CCBHC) UPDATE:**

Cyndy reported that the findings for the Feasibility and Readiness Assessment Report, including recommendations, have been received from MTM Consulting with a final score of 3.3 out of 5, indicating moderate concern of work needed to become a CCBHC. At this time, we are not sure what that means, but internally a subcommittee has been formed to track goals and progress. The IT Assessment has also been completed. Some of the goals of the subcommittee include increasing trauma-informed training, enhanced security of our IT systems, improving access to services and our billing cycle process. A SAMHSA grant notice related to CCBHC was announced and DBHDD indicated providers could apply if they chose to do so. Additionally, it was reported by DBHDD that if a provider is awarded a grant, DBHDD does not guarantee that the provider will be automatically certified by DBHDD, once a certification process is in place in Georgia. Out of 22 CSBs in the State, 12 CSBs plan to apply for the SAMHSA funds. New Horizons opted not to apply for this grant due to the fact that if federal funds were awarded, but not recognized at the State level, we did not want to put ourselves in a position to go backwards financially. Our goal is to hold on to the financial gains we have made over the past few months.

**APEX IN A COVID ENVIRONMENT:** Armanda Spears reviewed our service delivery approach for the Apex Program during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Apex is a DBHDD grant funded program that is a partnership between Community-Based Mental Health providers and local School Districts.

The Apex goals are as follows:

- 1) Provide Early Detection of the Youth's Behavioral Needs.
- 2) Provide Easier Access to Mental Health Services.
- 3) Increase Collaboration between Providers and Schools.

On-site services are provided to youth/students such as: CSI, Therapy, Groups, Assessments, Intakes and Referrals. New Horizons currently provides Apex services to Chattahoochee, Quitman, Clay, Stewart, and the Charter School in Randolph. Although we received a grant for Talbot County School District, they opted not to have the program at their schools. We have had to come up with creative and innovative ways to provide the Apex services due to COVID. Staff have used telephone calls and telehealth to provide recovery-focused coaching, support, and skills training to the students/youth. Younger children require more engaging techniques, so therapists use play therapy and therapeutic online games. For the older youth in Middle and High School, staff use Zoom calls, Face Time and emails for communication and relaying information. Staff have been flexible with their schedules in order to prevent interruption of the students virtual learning schedules with meetings often held with the students and families before and/or after classes. The collaboration with the school districts and New Horizons has helped tremendously during these times. Often, they piggyback off each other to ensure the student is engaged in services and work together to coordinate schedules. Chattahoochee County School District Staff has been very accommodating and supportive.

We have noticed that parents are more engaged since staff must communicate with them for consents to do telehealth and virtual meetings when services are not on the school site. Staff maintain communication through phone calls, emails, online multi-family meetings and sending home informational flyers. We assist with linking them to resources and providing information on assistance with internet, rent, utilities, food banks and other supplies needed.

We continue to work together with our partners to educate and support our youth and families, teaching them ways to cope with the stressors associated with the COVID Pandemic, connecting them to online training and parent support groups.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** The FY21 Strategic Plan has been updated for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter progress activity and a copy was emailed to Board Members prior to the meeting. Valerie reported the majority of the goals are on track and the goals with little activity are lagging due to current COVID restrictions. We are reviewing the Strategic Plan in Staff Executive Committee meetings and in Performance Improvement Committee meetings to ensure that we are staying on track on meeting the strategic plan goals.

**PRODUCTIVITY POLICY:** Denise reported that Productivity is a common practice in behavioral health and discussed New Horizons' Productivity Policy that became effective July 1, 2015. Staff productivity establishes a performance evaluation system and communicates work expectations. We also believe that staff productivity, to a large degree, determines the agency's future viability. Staff are made aware of productivity requirements in advance, and sign a letter acknowledging the productivity requirement. New staff receive both a copy of the acknowledgement letter they sign as well as a copy of the productivity policy. They are not immediately subject to the productivity standard. They have time to train and become acclimated before being subject to the productivity standard, typically 30 to 45 days. New Horizons desires that all staff succeed. It is our practice that supervisors coach staff who are struggling with productivity. We work to identify and remove barriers to making productivity.

While the policy spells out disciplinary steps that can be taken, up to and including termination as a last resort, we have had only one staff that I am aware of, that was impacted by this policy. This staff actually chose to terminate his employment with the agency, after being offered a non-productivity position. This staff had worked for NHBH for several years and had not been able to make productivity, in spite of all efforts to coach him and assist him in making productivity.

The other side of the coin is that staff are eligible for bonuses if they meet or exceed productivity for the year. For FY20, 11 staff made productivity, and received bonuses. At the end of FY20 we had 47 staff on productivity. Of the 47 staff, 11 made productivity. As of Feb 7, 2021, we have 40 staff currently on productivity, and 28 are currently either meeting or exceeding productivity. Another 6 are within 5-15% of making productivity.

Additionally, productivity is adjusted, as needed, based on circumstances. For example, we back out time for traveling to and from the county sites. We have adjusted productivity time due to staff being out with COVID. When staff do not have the assigned number of individuals to make productivity, there is obviously no penalty for not making productivity as this is beyond our staff's control.

Productivity information also helps us make staffing decisions. Staff productivity sets a standard and sets expectations. It is tied to the agency's finances.

**EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) FUNDING:** Cheryl Williams reported New Horizons Behavioral Health was awarded CARES Grant Funding to provide additional services in our rural areas. We currently serve the following rural counties: Chattahoochee, Randolph, Clay, Stewart, Quitman Harris, and Talbot. Individuals who choose to relocate to these areas may be eligible for these services and must meet eligibility criteria.

Services offered include:

**ESG/CARES – Street Outreach** – provide essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people; connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services; and provide urgent, non-facility based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility.

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**Individuals must be literally homeless:**

1. Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
2. Has a primary nighttime residence that is public or private place not meant for human habitation; (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs); or,
3. Is exiting an institution where (s) he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

**ESG/CARES Emergency Shelter** – provide temporary shelter for individuals awaiting permanent housing, etc.

**ESG/Rapid Rehousing** – designed to help those who are homeless transition into permanent housing.

New Horizons' staff Janis Jones at 706-325-5571 or Latarsha Brown at 706 573-1173 can be contacted for further information.

**Barriers:** It has been difficult getting referrals for our county areas for the Cares funding. We have established partnerships and relationships and have been getting the word out to other locations and working hard to provide services under the CARES grant.

**Plan:** To hire more staff to assist with efforts and establish other means of reaching individuals. If Board Members know of anyone interested in this position, please let us know. It is listed on the Job Postings on our website as a Case Manager position.

**DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE:** Susan reported to the Board on the following:

**Development:**

NEXUS started serving the Chattahoochee County High School today. This is a \$252,000 annual federal grant. We submitted the Year 4 continuation application in January which was due February 4th.

**Marketing & Community Relations:**

February is Heart Health Month with a focus on the mind/heart connection.

Weekly Facebook Live Integrated Health started August 10 at 10AM on Pops Barnes Facebook Feed. He has 5,000 followers we will be able to reach on various integrated health & wellness topics. We have a schedule and topics for the next 52 weeks with a few holidays in between.

We are also doing a show with DJ Chip from Davis Broadcasting immediately following the Facebook Live show. We have various shows scheduled through May 2021 on Health and Community tips topics.

Councilor Barnes arranged for a meeting with Rob Scott, Community Reinvestment Director with CCG to discuss the opportunity to apply for Public Services funding through CDBG. Grants run from \$7,500 to \$17,000 for non-profit agencies serving the targeted work by the Public Services grants.

Due to the Covid Pandemic we will continue with Recovery Rocks for Recovery Month. We are not sure if there will be GACSA funding available for the activity as last year's funding was cut in half.

Communities are slowly starting to have outreach events again. Randolph County will be doing a drive through Health Fair in April.

**COVID SURVEILLANCE REPORT- INDIVIDUALS AND STAFF:** Andrea encouraged everyone to stay vigilant in following the CDC guidelines and reported the following Covid-19 numbers:

- 106 individuals exposed to the COVID-19 virus
- 50 staff exposed to the COVID-19 virus
- 26 individuals with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19 virus (4 new cases)
- 34 staff with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19 virus (5 new cases)
- 1 COVID-19 related Death

Andrea indicated that several exposures reported today at our day treatment program originated from a group home outside of New Horizons that we hope will not lead to an outbreak of Covid cases.

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:** Board members shared information on how they, their families, and communities are managing the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Several reported the Covid numbers have increased in their counties, with holiday parties/gatherings being major contributors. Vaccine distribution is increasing and all are hopeful this will create a decline in cases in the near future. Social distancing, wearing masks, and limiting social gatherings should continue until the guidelines change.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Andrea reminded members there is no Board meeting in March. The next meeting is Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup> via teleconference.

The GACSB hired legislative consultants and lobbyists to monitor action on legislative bills related to mental health services. Several bills related to mental health (HB 209 and HB 213) are being discussed in the current legislative session. The Commission appointed by the Governor to study Behavioral Health services/needs in the State has been relatively quiet over the past few months.

Mr. Hoyte extended thanks to New Horizons leadership, staff, and fellow Board members for the great job they are doing.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public comments were presented.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, M/S/P Karen Johnson/Joseph Williams to adjourn the teleconference/meeting at 4:39 p.m., Board approved.

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David Ranieri  
Chairperson