



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

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
2100 Comer Avenue – New Horizons Training Room  
Columbus, GA 31906**

Date of Meeting: February 12, 2024

Members Present: Damon Hoyte, Nancy Schroeder, Joseph Williams,  
Terry Edwards, LaVerne Chaffin, Karen Johnson,  
and Sandra Gill

Members Excused: Ed Harbison, April Hughes, Linda McElroy,  
David Ranieri, and Edwina Turner

Staff Present: Andrea Winston, Denise Wade McLeod, Susan Gallagher,  
Danny Davenport, Cyndy Pattillo, Karen Cotton-Everett,  
Kenyetta Plummer, Chloe Landreth, and Molly Jones

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Damon Hoyte at 3:37 p.m.  
A quorum was established at that time.

**RECOGNITION OF GUEST(S) ATTENDING TODAY'S MEETING:** Dr. LaKaren  
Rickman, Psychologist and new employee of New Horizons.

**\* SECRETARY'S MINUTES (Approval of December 11, 2023 minutes):** M/S/P Joseph  
Williams/LaVerne Chaffin to approve the December 11, 2023 minutes, Board approved.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOCUS GROUP:** With a goal to better understand the needs of our  
communities and how New Horizons can meet them, Cyndy and LaKaren presented questions and  
requested feedback/input from Board Members in response to our community needs assessment for  
our Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) process. Topics for discussion  
included: Community Needs, Access and Barriers to Care, Services, Staffing and Workforce, and  
Partnerships and Care Coordination. Board Members responded that stigma, housing instability,  
lack of information/education and hesitancy from law enforcement and others to  
respond/understand mental health issues/behaviors are barriers for individuals to receive the help  
they need. The data will be compiled and information shared with staff and the Board.

**\*ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS FOR 2024:** As announced in the December Board meeting, it is time to elect officers for 2024. Our current slate of officers are: Damon Hoyte, Chair, Nancy Schroeder, Vice Chair, and Sandra Gill, Secretary. M/S/P Joseph Williams/LaVerne Chaffin to re-elect Damon Hoyte as Board Chair, Nancy Schroeder as Vice Chair, and Sandra Gill as Secretary, Board Approved.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW:** Susan reported on November and December financial data as January is still being closed out. Overall, November revenue is \$200,397 over budgeted projections. Medicaid Waiver revenue is trending upwards for the month and Medicaid fees are improving, but are still under budget by \$38,000 YTD. Grant-in-Aid FFS is below YTD budget by \$24,000. Grant in Aid revenue is \$450,000 above YTD budgeted projections. November expenses were \$438,246 over budgeted projections resulting in a November operating deficit of \$237,849. Salaries and benefits continue to be the largest area for budget overages, attributable to bringing staff to market rate, filling vacant positions, and an Employee Retention Bonus distributed in November. November ended with a YTD surplus of \$599,781. Operating under the CCBHC model with no corresponding CCBHC payment rate from DBHDD and the two Federal grants ended September 30th, we will continue to experience financial stress on the Agency. For December, revenue was \$363,300 under budgeted projections. Medicaid Fees and Grant-in-Aid FFS revenues are lower than budgeted as is Contract Revenue. YTD revenue is \$1,475,360 over budgeted predictions. Expenses, including salary and benefits, continue to be higher than budgeted. The Governor announced Bonus payments for all State employees, however, our contract was not amended until January and revenue will be reflected on the January financials. The YTD losses of \$276,712 reflect the financial impact of the federal grants and CCBHC contract sunseting. We are operating as a CCBHC in a Fee for Service payment model with FFS rates that have not increased since 2008. December KPI scores indicated our Cash on Hand was 156.92 days. Continued delays in operating without a PPS rate could reduce our COH to 90 days or lower. . We have been in discussion with DBHDD since it became evident the State PPS rate would be delayed. We received a CCBHC contract amendment of \$505,000 through June 2024 based on those discussions, however, this is not enough to continue CCBHC operations without a PPS rate and it cannot be used for salary expenses. These discussions escalated in December and January with a written proposal requesting an additional \$165,000 per month to support personnel and other costs while awaiting the PPS payment rate. At this time, we do not have an agreement for additional funding from DBHDD. As was reported in previous meetings, this gap in implementation is having a financial impact on the agency and our goal is to maintain our cash reserves and, if necessary, cut back on expenses and/or staff.

**AGGREGATED INCIDENT REPORT ANALYSIS – FY 23:** New Horizons Behavioral Health is strongly committed to protecting the welfare of those who seek our services and to offer quality, professional care in a safe and humane environment. The agency is dedicated to delivering the highest quality of services in an ethical environment that is respectful to the rights and confidentiality of each individual served. Kenyetta Plummer, Compliance Director, reported that this analysis is a tool that assists the agency in ensuring the health and safety of individuals and staff, and to identify areas for program improvement. The Corporate Compliance Department is charged with oversight of all reporting to DBHDD. Deaths and Critical Incidents are reportable to DBHDD and Internal Incidents are used as a performance improvement tool to enhance services and safety.

All incidents are reported by category and type and are subject to further analysis. Lowanna Richardson maintains the reports and collects the data. The information is used to identify trends and is reported to the Performance Improvement Committee, Individual Rights Committee, and the Clinical Care Committee. Total incidents, agency wide, by type for 2023 were 170, a significant decrease from 2021 and 2022. This includes Critical Incidents, Internal Incidents, Ethics, and Individual Rights complaints. Categories and Incident types have been the same since 2019 with the exception of reporting requirements for Covid-19. These were revised in September 2022 requiring the agency to only report Covid positive cases and Covid deaths for individuals only. In May of 2023, DBHDD discontinued all reporting requirements for Covid-19. A Safety Plan is now required with all reporting types. The Safety Plan is strategic in promoting incident intervention and prevention and formulates as a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for ongoing use. Reporting a death is required within 2 hours and non-death reporting the same day. Once DBHDD reviews the CIR and/or Safety Plan and confirms appropriate care and services were provided to the individual before, during, and after an incident, the objective is to close cases in a timely manner. Analysis of the report indicated CIR deaths increased by 2 in FY23, psychiatric hospitalizations decreased over 50%, ER visits for I/DD individuals decreased, and there was one Aggressive Physical Act (hit and run) by an individual resulting in death. CAPS were submitted for two incidents of Financial Exploitation (Staff to Individual) and for two Suicides. Programs with 10 or more internal incident reports are required to complete a CAP to assist with formulating performance improvement practices. New Horizons works tirelessly towards program improvement methods to address any issues identified from Compliance investigations, any DBHDD CAP, and/or any ongoing training needs identified.

**DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Chloe reported on an array of outreach events she and other New Horizons staff have attended recently. These included Christmas Winter Wonderland, Goodwill Christmas Resource Fair, Domestic Violence Roundtable Virtual Resource Fair, Harris County Senior Center Resource Fair, MLK Jr. Unity Award Breakfast, and the Clay County Career Fair. She also listed numerous upcoming events on her schedule. A number of staff and individuals attended Mental Health Day at the Capitol in January, and Chloe and Amelia Copeland will attend the GACSB Day at the Capitol February 13<sup>th</sup>. Marquis Hill, Youth Motivational Speaker, spoke at schools in Clay, Randolph, Harris, and Talbot counties. He was very well-received by the students and faculty. New Horizons' staff filled over 10 large donation boxes during the Christmas Donation Drive providing clothing, school supplies, and toys for the McKinney Vento Program and the Sara Spano clothing bank to benefit homeless children in Muscogee County. Social Media contacts continue to increase and collaborations with community partners are thriving and growing. Chloe indicated that New Horizons has a strong presence on our local TV stations and their websites and announced upcoming marketing plans that include schedule planning for our new Mobile Clinic unit, I/DD Awareness Month (March) activity planning, Mental Health Awareness Month (May) activity planning, a Suicide Prevention public service TV announcement, and a half-hour special on WRBL featuring Marquis Hill in mid-March.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Andrea shared information from Commissioner Tanner’s letter regarding support for Community Service Boards and Funding Enhancements. The letter indicated that without sustainable funding approved by the Georgia General Assembly, DBHDD was unable to expedite the request for financial assistance at this time, however, funds for crisis bed rates at Behavioral Health Crisis Centers were increased.

Our NADD Certification site visit is scheduled for February 28<sup>th</sup> – March 1<sup>st</sup>. This certification, for providing services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disability and mental health needs through the development of competency-based professional standards and through promoting ongoing professional development, is required for our CCBHC implementation process.

GACSB Day at the Capitol is February 13, 2024. Chloe plans to attend.

Mr. Hoyte shared ideas/thoughts on how he could advocate for behavioral health services for his colleagues.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 5:20 p.m. M/S/P Joseph Williams/Sandra Gill to adjourn the meeting, Board approved.

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Damon Hoyte  
Chairperson