



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: September 9, 2024

Members Present: Damon Hoyte, David Ranieri, Edwina Turner,
Terry Edwards, Karen Johnson Bussey, LaVerne Chaffin,
Nancy Schroeder, Sandra Gill, and Linda McElroy

Members Excused: April Hughes and Ed Harbison

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

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Damon Hoyte at 3:35 p.m. A quorum was established at that time.

INTRODUCTION AND OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEW BOARD MEMBER: Arcola Scott, Vice Chair of the Stewart County Commission, has graciously agreed to fill the vacant Board seat of Joseph Williams,. Ms. Scott has served as a Stewart County Commissioner since 2003 and is the first woman and the first African American woman ever to be elected to the Commission. She is married, with 2 children, and is a member of Greater St. Mark AME church. Mrs. Scott read the oath of office in today's meeting and the Board appointment form will be sent to the Stewart County Commission. Board Members thanked Mrs. Scott for her willingness to serve.

RECOGNITION OF GUEST(S) ATTENDING TODAY'S MEETING: Valona Baldwin, DBHDD Regional Coordinator, New Horizons staff Emily Rebeck and Tara Malone.

*** SECRETARY'S MINUTES (Approval of August 12, 2024 minutes):** M/S/P Terry Edwards/Arcola Scott to approve the minutes of August 12, 2024, Board approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW: July is the first month of FY25, and although it is a new year, Susan indicated we continue to have some of the same struggles from FY24, specifically Medicaid Waiver and Medicaid Fees trending below budget. In addition, County fund deficits are due to Columbus Consolidated Government supplements not received in a timely manner and the Federal Funds deficit is due to contracts not being processed at DCA for grant reimbursements.

July has reversed our monthly deficit trend with a surplus of \$162,628. This is attributed to cost containing measures around Salaries/Benefits and Contract Expenses combined with the CCBHC supplement of \$1.7 million for the first six months of FY25. Some items, such as Unemployment Insurance, Merit System Assessment, Insurance and Bonding are quarterly expenses and reflect \$0 actual expenses. Legal fees are submitted by the attorney's office and they invoice quarterly as well. Executive Leadership continues to monitor programs for efficiencies as well as improving the overall collection rates for billable services. New Horizons' Financial Key Performance Indicators (KPI) scores indicated days Cash on Hand is at 175. Days Cash on Hand is a formula based on cash in the bank and average daily expenses (\$54,058.56 as of July FY25).

Susan presented a graph illustrating how other CSBs in the Georgia safety net fared in FY24. Out of 21 CSBs, 12 ended FY24 with a negative margin and 9 ended with a positive margin. The median Days Cash on Hand across the safety net was 41 days and the median Personnel Expense Ratio was 73% (New Horizons is currently at 78%). We continue to look for opportunities to improve efficiencies and eliminate redundancies while maintaining quality services and retaining high performing staff.

***SHELTER PLUS CARE GRANT AWARD:** New Horizons has been awarded up to \$344,573 in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) funding to provide housing assistance in the Balance of State Continuum of Care. Our current PSH housing is located primarily in Harris County. M/S/P Terry Edwards/David Ranieri to accept the PSH funding, Board approved. A chart indicating HUD and ESG total funding amounts of \$709,940 was shared with the Board. Cheryl Williams, Residential Coordinator, has been diligent in seeking residential housing fund grant opportunities.

EXPRESS CLINIC UPDATE: Denise indicated the goals of Express Clinic are to serve individuals with increased access to services, an improved overall patient care experience, and enhanced efficiencies. A review of where we started with Express, April of 2023, how many we have served, 423 individuals, and changes in the schedule throughout the process was shared. Our next change, beginning October 1, is to have two providers available 5 mornings a week and 1 provider two afternoons per week. Andrea added these changes will allow more individuals to get the help they need when they need it and have hope when they leave.

DBHDD REGIONAL COORDINATOR: Valona Baldwin, Regional Coordinator with the DBHDD Region 6 Field office, introduced herself and reported that, based on data gathered by Commissioner Tanner, changes in the department have been implemented to include Regional Coordinators in each Region office and two Deputy Assistant Commissioners with oversight of three regions each. Her role is to ensure Mental Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse services are available and accessible to our communities and address issues, problem solve, develop new programs, identify gaps, and share the DBHDD story throughout our 31 county region. Ms. Baldwin has been a long time ally and supporter of New Horizons at the Region office and we look forward to working more closely with her in her new position.

DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: Chloe reported on outreach events attended recently including the Clay County Reading School Event, Georgia Recovers Bus Tour Kickoff, and the River Valley Regional Coalition presentation. A group of I/DD individuals participated in “Home is Where the Art Is” at SafeHouse Ministries recently and plan to enjoy the benefits of this unique program on a regular basis. FaceBook, Instagram, and Constant Contact outreach numbers are on the increase and Website and Page Traffic data was reviewed. Recovery on the River plans are going well with 15 speakers, 4 food trucks, 13 vendors, 9 sponsors, Master of Ceremonies, and a conversation tent for anyone interested in talking one on one with recovery speakers to have that opportunity. The event is September 27th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in Uptown Columbus. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Mobile Unit is September 17th. John Burdeshaw is filming his Recovery story, to be posted on-line with Columbus CEO, and a tour of Columbus Service Center and Intellectual/Developmental Disability programs with City Council members is scheduled for October 10th.

RECOVERY PRESENTATION: Emily Rebeck, Case Manager with New Horizons’ MAT program, shared her poignant, powerful story of addiction and recovery with Board members and staff. She will be a featured speaker at Recovery on the River. Her message of recovery and hope will certainly have an impact in the lives of others faced with addiction and substance use challenges.

MOBILE UNIT SERVICES: Andrea reminded Board Members that the Mobile Unit was purchased through a DBHDD grant to provide Covid Testing. We plan to add HIV and Hep C testing and integrated healthcare services. Hygiene kits will also be distributed and information related to services and other resources will be available. With interior modifications, a beautiful paint job, signage and our logo complete, the unit is ready to roll. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Mobile Unit is September 17th, but Board Members will have the opportunity for a firsthand look today following the meeting. A shared calendar has been created for team members to schedule events and a sign-up form is on our website. The first scheduled community event for the Mobile Unit will be the Tri-City Latino Festival on September 21st. The Mobile Unit will be a great asset to our service area and allow us to better serve underserved areas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Andrea announced notice has been given of using different strategies for the cost study to determine the PPS rate indicating the timeframe for implementation of the rate will, more than likely, be later than January. Whether the supplemental funding will continue past January is unknown, but meetings are scheduled to take a closer look at the cost study. An inquiry was made as to how staff are handling the changes at New Horizons. Andrea responded that many staff feel overwhelmed and morale has been low through all the recent changes. The new electronic health record has been a major factor in creating additional work, stress, and frustration, but we have made great strides to get where we are with the EHR and are seeing consistent improvements to the system. We are focusing on being more efficient and increasing productivity while giving our individuals the best care possible and have encouraged staff input in making these improvements.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were made.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 4:36 p.m. M/S/P Edwina Turner/David Ranieri to go into Executive Session to discuss employee periodic evaluation, Board approved. At 4:53 p.m. M/S/P Edwina Turner/Nancy Schroeder to end the Executive Session, Board approved.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:55 p.m. M/S/P Edwina Turner/Terry Edwards to adjourn the meeting, Board approved.

TOUR THE MOBILE UNIT: Board Members and staff enjoyed a tour of the new Mobile Unit.

Damon Hoyte
Chairperson