



A Community Mental Health / Developmental Disabilities / Addictive Diseases Program

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

May 11, 2020

Via Teleconference

Members Present: David Ranieri, Joseph Williams, Edwina Turner,
Sherrell Terry, Damon Hoyte, Karen Johnson,
and LaVerne Chaffin

Members Excused: April Hughes, Nancy Schroeder, Sandra Gill, Linda McElroy,
and Ed Harbison

Staff Present: Andrea Winston, Valerie Bowden, Denise Wade,
Susan Gallagher, Randall Newberry, and Molly Jones

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. A quorum was established at that time. 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: No guests were on the teleconference call.

*** SECRETARY'S MINUTES (Approval of April 13, 2020 minutes):** M/S/P Joseph Williams/Edwina Turner to approve the minutes of April 13, 2020 meeting, Board approved.

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TRANSPORTATION FUNDING REQUEST MEETING WITH DBHDD: Andrea reported, “For several years we have been talking to the department about our perceived inequities between our agency and other CSBs that receive funding to provide transportation for their GIA individuals. We have also been in robust conversations with our advocacy group, the GA Association of CSBs, regarding our financial concerns. Fortunately, Robyn, with the Association, was able to set up the meeting with DBHDD senior financial leadership. We met with Robert Dorr, Director, Division of. Accountability and. Compliance, Jeff Minor, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer, Mary Price, CFO for DBHDD, Robyn Garrett, Executive Director at the Georgia Association of Community Service Boards, Valerie, and myself.” Andrea indicated that each year New Horizons provides transportation for all of our individuals and the only funding we receive is for our Medicaid individuals. The entire transportation department loses approximately 700K dollars each year. Our agency also invests 370K of our own money to provide transportation to the GIA individuals. DBHDD funds GIA transportation for other CSBs by funneling money to the State of Georgia Coordinated Transportation System. After a lengthy conversation, the department acknowledged that we should have some money allocated for our GIA trips through the Coordinated Transportation System. They committed to looking into the system to see what happened to the money that should have been allocated to us. Valerie did a really good job of presenting the budget information, as well as our efforts to secure other funding related to Covid-19, to assist the agency. They requested that we look through each of our contracts to see if, perhaps, a line item had been omitted for GIA transportation funding and, after a review, we later confirmed that there was not any line item for GIA transportation. They committed to reviewing the transportation dollars that were given to Coordinated Transportation to see if any, or a portion, could be allocated to New Horizons. Board members were excited to hear this meeting took place and eagerly await the outcome.

GOVERNOR’S PROPOSED CUTS: On May 1st the Governor announced dramatic plans to slice the state’s budget 14% from the base of the FY20 original budget. That means an approximate 10% cut to the FY21 DBHDD budget since we have already sustained a 4% cut in FY20.

From the State of Georgia Memorandum:

“As you know, we have a strict constitutional mandate to create and adopt a balanced budget for our state.

“Due to the rapidly changing revenue picture for FY 2021, at this time we are asking every state agency to prepare for an FY 2021 budget that includes a 14% reduction from their FY 2020 original base.

“While the Great Recession of 2008 was considered to be a ‘once in a lifetime’ event, our current situation will certainly overshadow it. That is why this request is being made to ALL areas of the state budget with no exceptions.”

Andrea reminded the Board that late last year, during board meeting, we discussed the need to look at each program's economic viability in terms of it being able to cover its own expenses and also, if it positively contributes to our agency's overhead. Specifically, we had several discussions surrounding our financially burdensome Shelter Plus Care program. In light of the governor's pending cuts, we need to take a very hard look at programs and services that are not currently viable. We know that any cuts ultimately result in a loss of services, however, if we do not redefine our service lines in accordance with business practices, we, as the safety net for our most vulnerable citizens, will not survive.

Most economists indicate that we are headed for a recession that will be on the heels of an already economically depleted nation. Locally, several businesses will not be able to reopen, and stimulus checks, and unemployment compensation for employees will be depleted. So, for our agency, it will be virtually impossible for us to weather the current loss of revenue from program closures, and to then face a cut in our revenue streams for FY21 that starts in July.

Andrea continued, "Valerie and I are analyzing each program and will be prepared to make recommendations regarding specific programs and service lines that may be subject to discontinuation for the new fiscal year. Of course, we will present our plans for your consideration and approval prior to the new fiscal year." Board members asked if proposed cuts of programs, services, and staff would be presented in the June Board meeting and Andrea assured them a plan would be presented at that time. All State departments/agencies are asked to make these cuts, including Family Connection.

COVID-19 RESPONSE:

FINANCIAL REVIEW: Valerie presented the following financial information:

- We are still closing out the month of April and will have April revenue & expense results at the next board meeting. For the month of March, we incurred a deficit of (\$14,195) and have a year-to-date deficit of (\$9,146). The deficit is due to reducing services on March 23 due to COVID-19. Medicaid revenue and GIA FFS revenue for March was reduced by approximately \$40,000.
- Days Cash on Hand at the end of April were 2.81 days. April Medicaid collections were down approximately \$230,000 from March Medicaid collections, which is due to reduced services for the entire month of April.

DBHDD Current Financial Assistance Efforts – DBHDD has issued 3 contract amendments

- Amendment to cover all MH & AD contracts that reimburse based on program activity. At month end when we submit invoices, if the reimbursement is less than the historical monthly average, we can apply a COVID-19 adjustment to the invoice that will bring the invoice up to the average monthly amount. **Result: We were able to apply the COVID-19 adjustments to the March & April invoices and revenue from these DBHDD contracts has not been impacted by COVID-19.**

- Amendment to cover DD GIA revenue that reimburses based on program activity. At month end, when we submit invoices, if the reimbursement will be less than the historical monthly average, we can apply a COVID-19 adjustment to the invoice that will bring the invoice up to the average monthly amount. **Result: We were able to apply the COVID-19 adjustments to the March & April invoices and revenue from these DBHDD contracts has not been impacted by COVID-19.**
- Amendment to cover GIA FFS reimbursement. DBHDD calculated what New Horizons average monthly GIA FFS reimbursement has been for the months July 2019 through January 2020. Starting with April, we will receive that amount each month regardless of how much we bill. We will also be able to continue to bill and collect on any activity prior to April 1 that we have not been reimbursed for yet. **Result: April GIA FFS collections have not been impacted by COVID-19**

DBHDD Pending Financial Assistance Efforts

- DBHDD submitted an Appendix K, which has been approved, which will allow for some of the currently closed DD Services to be conducted via telephone or video chat and receive Medicaid reimbursement. **Results: We have been able to provide some of these services, although it does not allow us to bill at the pre-COVID levels. We are down about \$21,000 per month for these services.**
- Appendix K will also allow Medicaid DD Retainer Payments. DD Community Residential Alternative, Community Living Support Services, Supported Employment Services, Prevocational Services and Community Access services will be authorized for retainer payments in the event that the provider is not serving the member under other comparable services or using differential staff such as family caregivers to provide the service. **Result: We have been able to bill for retainer payments for March and April. We will realize the positive cash impact of this in May.**
- State Health Benefits Plan forgiveness. The State Association (GACSB) has submitted a request to have the State Health Benefit Plan insurance expense to be forgiven for the months of April & May. This represents approximately \$150,000 a month for New Horizons. **Result: We have not been told no on this yet, but it does not look like it will happen.**

Grants/Funding requests we have worked on:

- GEMA COVID-19 Public Assistance Grant.
- USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program.
- Georgia Healthcare Foundation – Unrestricted operating support up to a maximum of \$15,000.
- National Council COVID-19 Relief Fund - **Have received \$1,000, 5 used laptops and free access to COVID-19 and Mental Wellness resources.**
- HHS CARES Act Provider Relief Funding - **Have received \$7,136.**
- United Way and the Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley – Requested \$20,000 for the Covid Resource and Support Team.
- Payroll Protection Program.

PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW: Most of the staff we discussed last month remain on furlough. We have returned a few team members to assist with billing for the DD retainer payments and for some of the DBHDD funded contracts.

We are making plans for soft openings of some programs as we can while following safety guidelines. REACH Day Program has opened, with a small percentage of their traditional census, to test the social distancing and safety protocols put in place to see how our individuals would react. One of the largest hurdles is that a lot of people do not want to wear masks as it is uncomfortable.

Our Clinical Director is working with each program to develop site specific plans for either continuing limited services or to reopen at some point in the future.

The Outpatient Clinics and Residential services remain open. We have transitioned most of the outpatient appointments to telephonic or virtual platforms which have been well-accepted by our individuals.

The Children's SKY Clubhouse will open at the end of May for a limited summer program. We will take as many as we can safely house in the facility.

Case Management programs continue to work virtually or face to face, but are using pre-visit screening procedures.

Jail services continue on a limited scope in terms of doing assessments and med checks, however, groups have been suspended.

We are strategically looking at every program to establish safe opening plans and timelines in accordance with the GADPH and CDC guidelines. As of now, we are postponing opening large group programs in small facilities due to the inability to social distance.

Board members inquired about the morale of employees during this time. Andrea responded that overall it is good. Many of the employees on furlough are actually making more due to the stimulus checks and extra unemployment benefits. Some of the staff who continue working have flexible schedules of coming to the office on certain days and working at home on others. Our employees have really responded well to the changes and work hard to ensure New Horizons continues to operate as smoothly as possible. Nurse's Week celebrations last week were extra special honoring our front line staff who have gone above and beyond to help our individuals.

Programmatic Positive Elements: Last month we shared with you two new initiatives that were implemented to provide support to our individuals during this frightening pandemic. We are receiving very positive feedback regarding our Covid Resource and Education Team, as well as our Unscheduled Check-ins by the Medical Team. As you recall, the Covid Resource and Education Team of case managers is calling all NHBH individuals to check on them, and to provide education, resources, and support as it relates to Covid-19 symptoms and prevention strategies. Staff is also working to educate individuals on assistance available through the CARES act, such as eviction prevention and health services. Also, the Unscheduled Check-ins done by our Medical Team physicians who are calling individuals to provide support, medication assistance, and psychiatric assessments. These are unscheduled checks-ins via telephone to make sure all individuals are ok and do not escalate into a crisis situation.

Covid Agency Numbers Update:

As of today, the COVID-19 numbers are:

- 3 Known individuals exposed to the COVID-19 virus
- 7 Known staff exposed to the COVID-19 virus
- 6 Known individuals with a lab confirmed positive test for the COVID-19

Covid Numbers by County (per the GADPH):

County	Covid Positive	Covid Deaths
Muscogee	371	12
Harris	66	1
Talbot	27	1
Chattahoochee	12	0
Stewart	31	0
Randolph	168	21
Clay	27	3
Quitman	6	1

DEVELOPMENT/MARKETING PLANS: Susan presented the following updates:

Today is Day 60 of the National Covid Emergency.

- May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It is also National Drug Court Month.
- National Prevention Week is May 10-16. DBHDD Office of Behavioral Health Prevention and Federal Grants is hosting a week of virtual events each day at noon:
 - Monday: Preventing Prescription and Opioid Drug Misuse
 - Tuesday: Preventing Underage Drinking and Alcohol Misuse
 - Wednesday: Preventing Illicit Drug Use & Marijuana Use
 - Thursday: Clearing the Air – All About e-Cigarettes and Vaping
 - Friday: Suicide Risk Factor and Covid-19
- As part of NEXUS, New Horizons Behavioral Health has become more involved with the Substance Abuse Prevention Project of Morehouse School of Medicine. Will do remote presentation at their May 12th meeting on signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- The Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley hosts a daily COVID update. Presented information on the DBHDD Emotional Support Line last week. Sharing information on the Friday webinar related to Suicide Risk Factors and Covid-19 this week.
- The DBHDD Mental Health Awareness Trainings are scheduled to resume in August pending local approval for group meetings & trainings for groups over 10. Our next training is QPR – 2 sessions – on September 22.
- The April 28 Facebook post about the National Guard visiting our Cuthbert Service Center was the most popular post in April with 1,470 people reached and 175 engagements (shared, liked, etc.). The April 17 post on Self-Care for Anxiety reached 816 people with 62 engagements. The April 6 post on the DBHDD Emotional Support line reached 449 people with 10 engagements and the April 5th post on Direct Support Workers reached 349 people with 49 engagements. Our April 13 post on the Census reached 328 people with 19 engagements.

Funding and other Initiatives in Progress:

- MAT response to DBHDD
- USDA Rural Utilities Services Grant
- FCC Covid Funding
- GEMA/FEMA Covid Funding
- Community Foundation Funding/National Council

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS: Board members shared how they and their families are handling these very challenging times with children out of school/at home, graduation, birthday, and wedding plans in limbo, elderly parents needing assistance, adjusting to working from home, running a political campaign, and preparing for retirement, all while sheltering at home. They expressed amazement and appreciation of New Horizons' response to these challenges and the great job leadership and staff are doing to adjust and adapt while continuing to provide support and services for the individuals we serve.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Senator Ed Harbison lost his mother this past week. Flowers were sent and all are asked to remember his family in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

Susan and Andrea will present tomorrow at the City Council meeting (via Zoom) regarding the new public health crisis, due to the fear, anxiety, and depression, that one in five persons experiences, that has now increased exponentially due to the pandemic.

Board Reappointments – Approved - (terms continue to 2023):

Nancy Schroeder – Muscogee County

Edwina Turner – Stewart County

Linda McElroy – Quitman County

Pending: Sherrell Terry – Talbot County (reappointment not yet received)

Sandra Gill – term expires June 2020 – appointed by Board as optional member –

Mrs. Gill is interested in continuing to serve – Board vote needed in May or June meeting.

Thank you to all Board Members for their service and dedication to New Horizons and those we serve.

Mr. Ranieri thanked Board members and New Horizons staff for continuing to serve our most vulnerable population and encouraged everyone to keep up the great work being done. He expressed sympathy to Senator Harbison and his family, congratulations to Ms. Chaffin on her retirement, and best wishes to Ms. Terry on her campaign for Probate/Magistrate Judge in Talbot County.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, M/S/P Joseph Williams/Edwina Turner to adjourn the teleconference/meeting at 4:45 p.m., Board approved.

David Ranieri
Chairperson