



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

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**NEW HORIZONS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
2100 Comer Avenue – Conference Room B  
Columbus, GA 31906**

Date of Meeting: January 10, 2022

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

Members Excused: David Ranieri, Ed Harbison, Linda McElroy, Sherrell Terry, and April Hughes

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

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. A quorum was established at that time. Board Chair David Ranieri was unable to attend today’s meeting. Board Member Damon Hoyte agreed to preside over the meeting.

**RECOGNITION OF GUEST(S) ATTENDING TODAY’S MEETING:** Mac Moye, Stewart County Manager.

**\* SECRETARY’S MINUTES (Approval of December 13, 2021 minutes):** M/S/P Joseph Williams/Nancy Schroeder to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2021 meeting, Board approved.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW:** Valerie reported that due to the holidays and only four work days completed so far in January, the December financial report is not finalized. Additional Covid relief funds of \$72,623 to cover loss revenue was received. There were no unusual items in December and days Cash on Hand is at 59 days for the end of 2021. Board Members were excited to hear this news and congratulated the leadership team.

**AP CONTRACTS, C & A, FCC GRANT, STIMULUS FUNDS:** Denise reported on the Staff Enhancement Contract for C & A programs that combines several elements: Apex Internship, Certified Peer Specialists-Youth and Parent, Housing Coordination, and Workforce Enhancements. Positions are posted for the CPS positions. Historically, we have had great difficulty in hiring for these positions. Housing Coordination will pay for a portion of staff salary to provide linkage to available housing programs to youth/young adults who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Workforce enhancement includes funding for both an Apex Intern and as incentives for hiring and/or retaining staff. With current staff shortages and difficulties in filling positions, we are working to determine how best to operationalize this contract.

The USDA rural Telehealth Grant is for \$51,230 in telehealth equipment to improve services in outlying locations including Randolph, Harris, Stewart, and Talbot counties. Equipment will include smart phones, tablets, Bluetooth speakers, cases, wireless mice, and signature capture pads. There is a 15% cash match required for this grant.

**\* FY22 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** A copy of the plan was sent to Board Members prior to the meeting for review. The purpose of the Performance Improvement Committee is to ensure that leadership, clinical and support employees demonstrate a consistent effort to provide quality services in a safe atmosphere respectful of the needs of the individuals and families served. We believe that continuously improving performance helps us to attain the highest standards of quality. New Horizons' Mission, Vision, and Values direct the agency to continuously improve the outcomes of care and service provided. New Horizons seeks feedback from persons served in a number of ways. Board members represent our service area counties, we participate in the Consumer Network, leadership and staff members are active participants and supporters of NAMI and our local chapter. Individuals in services complete Satisfaction Surveys annually, suggestion boxes are located in program waiting areas, and feedback is also received from external review organizations such as CARF, DBHDD, and ORS among others. Employee Satisfaction Surveys are also completed annually. DBHDD implemented Comprehensive Community Provider Standards (KPIs) and performance toward attainment of the standards is monitored regularly with feedback included in goal-setting decisions. Given the on-going Covid pandemic, additional means of input are being sought. The structure of Performance Improvement includes the Board, Executive Director, Staff Executive Committee, Performance Improvement Committee, Clinical Care, Environment of Care, and Rights, Responsibilities, and Ethics Subcommittees. Performance Improvement goals are selected, progress is monitored, and an annual report is provided which states whether or not goals are met. The Performance Improvement Plan is reviewed annually. M/S/P Joseph Williams/Edwina Turner to approve the FY22 PI Plan, Board approved.

**\*FY22 ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS:** As announced in the December Board meeting, it is time to elect officers for 2022. Our current slate of officers are: David Ranieri, Chair, Sherrell Terry, Vice Chair, and Sandra Gill, Secretary. M/S/P Joseph Williams/Nancy Schroeder to elect Damon Hoyte as Board Chair, Board Approved. M/S/P Joseph Williams/Edwina Turner to re-elect Sherrell Terry as Vice Chair, Board Approved. M/S/P Joseph Williams/Nancy Schroeder to re-elect Sandra Gill as Secretary, Board Approved. Mr. Hoyte expressed his thanks and gratitude to the Board for their nomination, approval, and support as the new Board chair.

**\*BOARD MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2022:** The 2022 Board meeting calendar was sent to Board members prior to the meeting. Andrea reminded the Board that no meeting is scheduled for November (rather than October) again this year as that is the month for the GACSB Educational Exchange. With no suggestions or concerns from members, M/S/P Joseph Williams/Nancy Schroeder to approve the 2022 Board meeting calendar/Board approved.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** The plan was sent to Board members prior to the meeting for review. With goals of demonstrating superior treatment services, financial viability, and improving community awareness, Valerie indicated new objectives have been added and progress from the first two quarters updated since the Board's last review. With a number of goals added that relate to CCBHC implementation, progress on goals is going well. Telehealth and integrated healthcare are other areas we are looking to expand and improve. Continuing to implement systems and processes related to new demands/risks of the Covid 19 pandemic is ongoing.

**CO-RESPONDER PROGRAM:** Denise reported on the Co-Responder pilot program, through DBHDD, for a Licensed Clinician to work with law enforcement in responding to 911 calls related to behavioral health issues. This program is being implemented in many locations as the need is great to have trained staff to assist law enforcement with behavioral health crises. The position has been posted, but the critical work shortage we (like many agencies) are experiencing, leaves us challenged to find credentialed staff for this hands on, in the field, Masters level position.

Many other open positions for clinicians, nurses, and clerical staff remain unfilled. We have reached out to schools, recruiters, and staffing agencies to fill these positions, but with major competitors like West Central, Veterans Administration, Ft. Benning, and the Bradley Center who are in a position to pay higher salaries, the struggle continues.

**ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT:** For many years, New Horizons has worked with the Probate Courts, primarily in Muscogee County, but also in our other seven counties, to utilize what we have called Outpatient Commitment, but DBHDD and others call Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT). Andrea announced that DBHDD has reached out to us to provide (AOT), a process by which an individual is assessed by New Horizons staff and a hearing held in Probate Court regarding whether they meet criteria for a Probate Court Order and, if so, they are mandated to participate in mental health treatment. New Horizons' staff develops a plan for what treatment the Judge may order as part of the commitment. The Court appoints an attorney to represent the individual and, if possible, invites a friend or family member to the hearing. If the Judge orders AOT after hearing testimony, the order can be for up to 12 months. The goal is to stabilize the individual, provide needed services, and decrease inpatient admissions and/or arrests of the individual. AOT works best with individuals who are assessed as needing antipsychotic medication, but are not taking it, and for whom substance use/addiction is not the major issue. In some cases, the Judge may order the individual to live in a certain location, attend other programs, or, if homeless, to ensure they have a residence. If the individual does not follow the plan, additional hearings may be requested and the Judge may adjust the plan, order days in jail, order an involuntary inpatient admission, or otherwise work to gain compliance with treatment. The Judge uses their status and authority to influence the individual's compliance. The order ends in 12 months, but New Horizons may seek an additional 12 months order in some cases.

**MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER FOR COUNTIES:** Susan reached out to Shaun Golden, Executive Director of Golden Opp 4 U, a motivational speaker that Ms. Winston and several Board Members had the opportunity to hear at the GACSB Educational Exchange in November. Those who heard his presentation were very impressed and thought his message would be beneficial to students in their school systems, especially those with behavioral problems. Susan has also been in contact with Randolph, Clay, and Stewart County school systems but, due to Covid, they have not provided any dates as yet for speaking events. A date in late spring or just before summer vacation may be more appropriate for this type of event. As Mr. Golden has not yet responded, Susan will contact the GACSB for assistance in reaching him. Updates will be provided as additional information is received and plans finalized. Mr. Hoyte requested that Chattahoochee County schools be included.

**“DID YOU KNOW” CAMPAIGN:** Inspired by an idea from Ms. Winston, the “Did You Know” campaign is underway. The targeted marketing campaign, on a wide array of topics, is directed at members of City Council, Law Enforcement, Family Connection, and County Boards in our service area to name a few. A postcard, mailed monthly to the target group, will cover “Did You Know” topics including: Medication Assisted Treatment, Children’s Services, P.A.T.H. program services, Integrated Healthcare, Housing options, Walk-In/Open Access services, and Spravato (new medication) treatment, Muscogee County Jail/Court Services, Telehealth, and Genoa Pharmacy services. The goal of the campaign is to educate the public on the wide array of services New Horizons offers.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** A handout on DBHDD’s proposed 9-8-8 plans to address the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis system was included in Board member packets for information purposes. Andrea reported that starting July 2022, 9-8-8 calls in Georgia will be answered by the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Key features will include: Connecting a person with immediate and ongoing resources, promoting cost efficiency, reducing the burden on safety resources, and helping to end the stigma of seeking care. The handout emphasized that 9-8-8 is needed is to allow individuals to have “someone to talk to,” someone to respond,” and “somewhere to go.”

Andrea reported that Board Member April Hughes and Baby A.J. are doing well.

The Subcommittee, formed a few months ago to discuss the CEO’s benefits and retirement, will be contacted by Valerie soon to set up a meeting to review options. Subcommittee members are: Joseph Williams, Karen Johnson, and Edwina Turner.

Mr. Williams inquired about access to Conference Room B as some hallways in the building are blocked. Alternative ways to reach the room were shared as well as parking options to make access easier.

Mr. Hoyte stated he is honored to be elected to serve as Board Chair and to continue a leadership legacy from Chattahoochee and Stewart Counties. Chattahoochee County Commissioner Walt Rosso proudly served as Chair for two years and Lawrence Young, long-serving, dedicated Stewart County Board Member served as a mentor to Commissioner Hoyte.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, M/S/P Joseph Williams/Sandra Gill to adjourn the meeting at 4:23 p.m., Board approved.

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Damon Hoyte  
Chairperson