



PARTNERS
Improving Lives. Strengthening Communities.
Partners Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2020 - 6:00 PM

Partners Board of Directors met by means of a virtual Zoom/conference call for its regular monthly meeting.

Board Member Attendance

Commissioner Susan Allen	A	Mike Hoffman	A
Commissioner Kevin Austin	P	Commissioner Anita McCall	A
Commissioner Kitty Barnes	P	Linda McCrary	P
Beth Brown (non-voting)	A	Henry Morphis - <i>Vice Chair</i>	P
Commissioner Jeffrey Brittain	P	Barry Nelson (non-voting)	P
Hope E. Bryant	P	Commissioner Marvin Norman	A
Debra Cheek - <i>Treasurer</i>	P	David O'Connor	P
Daryl Cook	P	Russ Perkins – <i>Chair</i>	P
Steve Garrison	P	Joseph Ramey	P
Commissioner Bill Goins	P		
Jane Hinson	P		

Partners Staff Present

Rhett Melton	Chief Executive Officer
Shireen Stone	Chief Operating Officer
Susan Lackey	Chief Financial Officer
Andrew Walsh	Chief Legal Officer
Selenna Moss	Chief Performance and Compliance Officer
Tammy Pyles	Clerk to the Board
Kim Powell	Deputy Clerk to the Board

Others Present

Yvonne French	DHHS Liaison
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I. Call to Order

Chair Russ Perkins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Perkins stated for the record that Partners Board of Directors meeting is an open meeting and the line is open to the public. He noted that instructions to join the meeting are posted on the public website. A roll call was conducted to confirm attendance and new board member, David O'Connor was introduced. Mr. Perkins acknowledged those members who expressed an interest in and have been newly appointed or reappointed to committee service for FY21 and he presented the membership roster for each committee, which is attached hereto. Mr. Perkins informed the board of the resignation of Dr. Richard Merlo from Surry County.

II. Agenda Revisions

- A. There were no agenda revisions.

III. Citizen Recognition

- A. There were no citizens present for public comment.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Previous Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the August 20, 2020 meeting were included in the board meeting agenda packet for approval. Chair Russ Perkins asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. Joe Ramey entered a motion and Kitty Barnes seconded. The floor was opened for discussion. There being no discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

V. Reports

A. Finance Committee Report – Debra Cheek presented the Finance Committee Report which was included in the board meeting agenda packet.

1. Budget Revision #2 FY21 – Susan Lackey reviewed budget revision #2 which received prior approval from the Finance Committee. Debra Cheek set forth for board approval. Russ Perkins called for a vote. Following brief discussion about the distribution of funds related to the CARES Act, the motion carried unanimously.
2. July Financial Statements – Financial statements for July 2020, along with a detailed summary, were included as part of the board meeting agenda packet. Susan Lackey provided an overview of the Balance Sheet and Year-to-Date Income Statements, including Medicaid and non-Medicaid.

B. Provider Council President's Report – In the absence of Beth Brown, there was no report.

C. CFAC Report – Linda McCrary provided the following report:

- The CFAC met September 15, 2020, via Zoom.
- Russ Perkins attended the meeting along with Stacey Harward and Wes Rider from the State Community Engagement and Empowerment team. Wes and Stacey provided a training on Making Connections, designed to help CFAC find ways to increase and maintain membership and participation.
- An update to the bylaws was approved.
- A discussion was held regarding the possibility of adding Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) as a 4th disability to be represented on CFAC. Currently the NC Statutes do not recognize TBI, but it was suggested that Partners CFAC take the lead by adding representation, hoping that the state will follow suit. The Community Involvement Committee, along with a few other members, will begin the exploration process.
- Vacancies remain for Substance Use in Lincoln, Catawba and Surry counties. Mental Health vacancies remain in Cleveland, Yadkin and Surry counties. I/DD vacancies remain in Rutherford and Surry counties.

D. CEO Report – Rhett Melton provided the following information:

1. Local Updates

- a. Annual External Quality (EQR) Review – Mr. Melton reminded the board of the annual, required state-contracted onsite review that occurred July 29-30. He explained the scoring algorithm and discussed scores achieved in previous years. He commented that barring any conversation or appeals that may affect the final score, Partners did extremely well and achieved a score of ninety-five (95).
- b. National Association of Quality Assurance (NCQA) Review – Mr. Melton also reminded the board of the hard work Partners has done over the last several months in preparation to transition from URAC accreditation to the NCQA, which is the gold standard for managed care organizations, and is a requirement for Tailored Plan operations. The onsite review occurred July 20-21 and Partners achieved a score of ninety-six point seven (96.7), which the NCQA representative noted is one of the highest scores they have seen for an initial review for accreditation of an organization. He

noted this places Partners in a good position for additional levels of accreditation Partners may seek through the NCQA in the future.

- c. Covid-19 – Partners continues in *Partners Stage 1.5* with most people continuing to work remotely, which will continue until the risk is further minimized. He explained the daily Symptom Tracker System implemented by Partners HR Director, Libby McCraw that all staff members complete each day. This has proven to be a valuable tool in identifying risks and limiting the spread of the disease. Seven (7) staff members have tested positive; six (6) have fully recovered; one (1) is still symptomatic; and no staff members are currently hospitalized.
2. State Updates
 - a. CARES Act Funding – Mr. Melton explained that the additional estimated \$8M CARES Act funding will come to Partners through earnings. He discussed the significant reductions in allocations by the state over the last six years which have resulted in reduction of contracts to Partners providers for state funds. He noted that the CARES Act funding has filled the void for this fiscal year and enabled Partners to restore allocations to providers for FY21 to the FY20 levels. He noted that this funding is a one-time occurrence related to the Covid-19 pandemic and that Partners is working aggressively towards a permanent fix for this issue with legislators in preparation for the next fiscal year's budget.

VI. Discussion Agenda

A. County Commissioner Advisory Committee – Behavioral Health Focused Updates

1. **Burke County** – Commissioner Jeff Brittain requested information about CFAC and Linda McCrary provided an overview on the purpose and functions of the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC). Mr. Melton added historical points and noted that Partners, from its inception, recognized the significant value in the feedback and guidance from CFAC to Partners work and established an integral advisory relationship with CFAC long before it became a formal requirement. He acknowledged the CFAC representatives on Partners Board and thanked them for their service and value they bring to the organization.
Commissioner Brittain provided the following report:
 - a. After an interruption to this service, a Partners staff therapist has been embedded in the county's department of social services. He added that the county is very pleased with this service.
2. **Catawba County** – Commissioner Kitty Barnes provided the following report:
 - a. The county continues to address Covid-19 issues, has received the CARES Act funds and have determined the 25% for various municipalities.
 - b. There are currently 2,895 positive cases; 51 deaths which were mainly people over age 75; and 15 people are currently hospitalized.
 - c. The county continues to see increased mental health issues, instability and frustration related to the pandemic and these folks are being referred to providers.
3. **Cleveland County** – In the absence of Commissioner Susan Allen no report was provided.
4. **Gaston County** – Commissioner designee Joseph Ramey provided the following report:
 - a. Covid-19 percentages are trending in the right direction; down to 8.1% after being as high as 11.5%.
 - b. A new program, Gaston Saves, has been rolled out to teach people about the importance of the CDC guidelines such as wearing a mask and hand washing, maintaining social distance, etc.
 - c. He is working with the Superior Court and Public Defender's Office to have a Drug Court in place in the next 60 days.
5. **Iredell County** – In the absence of Commissioner Marvin Norman no report was provided.
6. **Lincoln County** – In the absence of Commissioner Anita McCall no report was provided.
7. **Rutherford County** – County Manager Steve Garrison provided the following report:
 - a. As with all counties, Rutherford continues to deal with Covid-19 continuity and planning. The county is fully exploring the new Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CV (Coronavirus) Program to determine what opportunities exist for Rutherford County, which continues to be a

Tier 1 Commerce County with many needs, one of the biggest being substance addiction. He noted this concern was part of the transition to Partners and he requested that if Partners or any of the county representatives on Partners Board could share experiences and examples of what they are doing and who they are partnering with related to CDBG, writing and managing grants, etc. He asked that you send him a quick email about the multi-tiered CDBG Program, that provides funding for housing and other assistance and how your counties are utilizing the program. He mentioned that Burke and Rutherford Counties are members of the Gateway Foundation, a subsidiary of Dogwood Health Trust and he cited Pisgah Legal Services that other counties may be associated with. He noted that Rutherford County is taking a look at the Appalachian Regional Commission's INSPIRE initiative (Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems), and that the county is wanting to make sure that Rutherford can take advantage of programs that are available.

8. **Surry County** – Commissioner Bill Goins provided the following report:
 - a. The county continues to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. He reported 1250 cases; 22 deaths; 1184 have recovered; and the health director feels good that the numbers are leveling off.
 - b. The county remains concerned about the impact Covid-19 has had on people staying at home and related increases in substance abuse, the opioid plight and overdoses.
9. **Yadkin County** – Commissioner Kevin Austin provided the following report:
 - a. He responded to Steve Garrison and suggested that Mr. Garrison contact Paige Worsham with NCACC.
 - b. He reported 700 Covid-19 cases which is a little more than 2% of the county's population. Of those 700 cases, 1% have passed away. The county has paid attention to the demographics of the people who have been affected and have reached out to vulnerable communities in the county.
 - c. Presently, the county is addressing back to school issues as schools are open. The county discussed the impact of in-person attendance at school on children's mental health and schools are being monitored for symptomatic people, positives, exposures and contact tracing.
- B. Tailored Plan Update – Rhett Melton stated that the Tailored Plan Request for Application (RFA) will be released on November 2, 2020 and is due back to the state on January 19, 2021. The Partners team has and will continue to work on the document through the holidays and expects the response to include 20 bound copies of 2,000-plus pages of the completed application. Although the time frame to completion of the RFA is short, the team is ready to compile and finalize the document for submission to the state. Work continues on large elements such as finalize decisions about a health plan partner, Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) vendor relationship and Information Technology (IT) infrastructure - which is critical. Due diligence on these decisions continues to progress. The state has indicated they will announce their decision in mid-to-late May 2021 on awarding the 5-7 Tailored Plan contracts. He discussed expansion of services to additional counties if all seven current LME/MCOs are not awarded a Tailored Plan contract. He also explained the two books of business, including the NC Medicaid contract and the NC State Block Grant money which defines the distinction between the MCO status and the LME, as well as how those activities will be addressed in the Tailored Plan RFA. Lastly, he reported on identification and filling of key positions to round out the team in preparation for Tailored Plan operations. Brief discussion ensued about the number and process of Tailored Plan contracts that may be awarded by the state.
- C. Executive Dashboard Report-July 2020 – The report was included as part of the board meeting agenda packet. Shireen Stone stated that not much has changed since the last report. She provided an overview of the dashboard, including annualized penetration rates by county and she explained increases in Medicaid penetration rates in Surry, Lincoln and Rutherford County compared to July 2019. She reviewed Super Measures data: Transitions to Community Living (TCL), Innovations, and Post-discharge Follow Up. She noted efforts to overcome hurdles related to Covid-19 that have impacted TCL and Post-discharge Follow Up, as well as claims. Brief discussion ensued and Shireen and Rhett explained transition of Usual and Customary Rates (UCR) to non-UCR dollars, block funds and related effects on claims data. Shireen noted that Partners continues to assist providers with corrections to claims so they can be paid.

- D. FY21 Strategic Plan Update – The report was included as part of the board meeting agenda packet. Chair Russ Perkins commented that Partners Strategic Plan updates will be provided to the board on a routine basis, with the next update due preferably in January 2021. Rhett Melton provided a global report on the elements of the plan and he noted for future reports the format will be a more user-friendly version. He provided an update on each of the eight goals, how each goal is measured, the status for the month of July, the effects of Covid-19 and he explained Partners efforts to achieve each goal. Brief discussion ensued, including a request for presentations by Partners to catchment area BOCC's. Mr. Melton stated presentations are provided at the pleasure of the BOCC's based on their requests for specific topics. Additional discussion items included value-based contracting; emergency department use related to Covid-19 and identifying alternative resources for members; social determinants of health for members who will be covered under a Tailored Plan contract; and how Partners staff volunteers are identified at community events.

VII. Adjournment

With there being no further discussion, Chair Russ Perkins asked for a motion to adjourn. At 7:33 p.m., Joe Ramey entered a motion and Jeff Brittain seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Pyles
Clerk to the Board



FY 2021
Board Officers and Committee Assignments

Board Officers

Russ Perkins - *Chair*
Henry Morphis – *Vice Chair*
Debra Cheek – *Treasurer*

Executive Committee

Russ Perkins - *Chair*
Henry Morphis - *Vice Chair*
Debra Cheek - *Treasurer*
Steve Garrison
Linda McCrary
Vacant – *Immediate Past Chair*

Human Rights Committee

Jane Hinson - *Chair*
Kitty Barnes
Mike Hoffman
Russ Pekins – *Ex-officio*

Nominating Committee

Henry Morphis, *Chair*
Jeffrey C. Brittain
Hope E. Bryant
Joe Ramey
Russ Perkins - *Ex-officio*

Finance Committee

Debra Cheek - *Chair*
Kevin Austin
Daryl Cook
David O'Connor
Joe Ramey
Russ Perkins – *Ex-officio*

PARTNERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS- STANDING COMMITTEES SCHEDULE			
COMMITTEE/PARTNERS STAFF REPRESENTATIVE	TIME	WHEN	WHERE
Finance Committee Terri Morton 704-842-6481 tmorton@partnersbhm.org	5:00 p.m.	2nd Thursday of each month	1985 Tate Blvd., SE, Hickory or Teleconference from Gastonia (Currently Teleconference)

Human Rights Committee Keshia Sandidge 704-884-2698 KSandidge@partnersbhm.org	6:00 p.m.	3 rd Tuesday in the months of (usually) August, November, February and May	1985 Tate Blvd. SE Hickory Basement Multipurpose Rm. (Currently Teleconference)
Executive Committee Tammy Pyles 704-884-2625 tpyles@partnersbhm.org	-	Schedule as needed	-
Nominating Committee Tammy Pyles 704-884-2625 tpyles@partnersbhm.org	-	Schedule as needed	-

If you are unable to attend a meeting of a committee you are assigned to, please contact the staff representative to the committee, or Tammy Pyles, Clerk to the Board at (704) 884-2625 or tpyles@partnersbhm.org.