

Board of Community Health  
Meeting  
January 18, 2024

**Members Present**

Norman Boyd  
Roger Folsom  
David Crews  
Anthony Williamson  
Nelva Lee  
Cynthia Rucker  
Shane Mobley  
Robert Cowles

**Members Absent**

The Board of Community Health held its meeting via Zoom teleconference. (An agenda and a List of Attendees are attached hereto and made an official part of these Minutes as Attachments #1 and #2). Chairman Norman Boyd presided and called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**Minutes**

The Minutes of the December 14, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

**Opening Comments**

Chairman Boyd provided the following updates:

- Former Board member Russell Crutchfield was appointed by Governor Brian P. Kemp to serve as his new Chief Operating Officer.
- Welcomed new Board member: Dr. Tommy Hopkins

**Committee Reports**

Anthony Williamson, Care Management Committee Chairman provided the following updates to the Board:

- Chet Bhasin, FACHE, Executive Director, Georgia Board of Healthcare Workforce shared website information related to physician workforce data that details physicians by county and specialty.
- CMO leadership shared data and presentations on healthcare workforce challenges that included the following:
  - Due to challenges in access, rural counties have a higher incidence of disease. Currently, there are nine counties in Georgia that have no practicing physician.

- Strategies being implemented to address access:
  - Student loan payback for new graduating physicians to encourage them to work in rural areas in exchange for reimbursement on their loans.
  - School-based clinic grants for Allied health providers, nurses, behavioral health counselors, and social workers.
  - Telehealth, mobile clinics, and remote patient monitoring.

## **Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Carlson thanked the Board, members of the public, and staff for their participation via Zoom.

The following updates were provided to the Board:

- 2024 legislative session is underway. During the first week, the General Assembly was able to agree and pass a calendar for the 40-day legislative session.

Crossover day will be on Thursday, February 29th, and Sine Die will take place on Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

It's always the Department's intent to remain a responsible and reliable resource to the Governor's office, Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), and the legislature throughout these deliberations.

- Last week, Governor Kemp released his amended 2024 and fiscal year 2025 budgets; in conjunction with the State of the State address.

Commissioner Carlson thanked Governor Kemp, OPB Director Rick Dunn and their respective staff for support of the following:

- Approval of 20 new positions for our proposed Care Management Organization (CMO) performance management project, and the salary increases proposed for our Healthcare Facility Regulation (HFR) surveyors across the State, both of which were approved by our Board in August, and we are grateful for OPB's continued support of these efforts.
- Funding towards the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Support Waiver Program (COMP) rate studies, which are integral in stabilizing the provider networks across the state, whose services are vital to thousands of families in Georgia. This was another item approved by this Board.
- Strides to strengthen our SHBP plan by devoting much needed funds to bring future projections of revenues and expenses into alignment.

This support is vital to Director Amis and his team, as our entire country tries to navigate the realities of higher health care costs and inflation.

- Governor's commitment to this State workforce that included a \$1,000 stipend in December and the proposed cost of living adjustments across all agencies.

- Staff accomplishments and recognitions:

In the last week alone, I have personally witnessed a staff member reach outside Medicaid to find coverage for a family informed of an unexpected cancer diagnosis, while only days earlier another member of our team secured a much-needed waiver renewal for a family so their daughter could move forward with her treatment. Meanwhile, SHBP helped a lifelong educator and her family navigate through her new retirement.

- Employees' years of service milestones.

Brian Dowd, Deputy Executive Director, Policy, Compliance and Operations, Medical Assistance Plans presented to the Board for final adoption the Medical Assistance Plans, 1115 Demonstration Amendment: Planning for Healthy Babies (P4HB) Demonstration Amendment Public Notice.

The amendment would make permanent a provision initially enacted during the Public Health Emergency (PHE) that allowed legally responsible parents and caregivers to be reimbursed to provide personal support services within the Georgia Pediatric Program (GAPP).

DCH seeks to continue this allowance to ensure delivery of care to our GAPP population and help address provider workforce shortage issues. It was noted that the legally responsible parents and caregivers are under the same requirements that other direct service caregivers must meet. The requested amendment is limited to personal support services and does not include the provision of skilled nursing services.

An opportunity for public comment was held on December 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. and December 21, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. Written comments were due on or before January 16, 2024. No oral comments were received. Fifty written comments were received.

Commenters were in full support of the proposed amendment and noted that adopting this authority serves as a lifeline to many families. Additionally, commenters expressed their interest in ongoing dialogue to ensure the youth of Georgia with medical challenges and behavioral health challenges are not invisible and remain a vital part of what makes Georgia a beautiful place to call home.

The Department thanked the commenters for their written comments and support.

Mr. Dowd respectfully asked for the Board's favorable consideration of final adoption.

Roger Folsom MADE a MOTION to approve Medical Assistance Plans, 1115 Demonstration Amendment: Planning for Healthy Babies (P4HB) Demonstration Amendment Public Notice. Robert Cowles SECONDED the MOTION. ON THE MOTION, the yeas were 8, nays 0, abstained 0, and the MOTION was APPROVED.

(A copy of the Medical Assistance Plans, 1115 Demonstration Amendment: Planning for Healthy Babies (P4HB) Demonstration Amendment Public Notice is attached hereto and made an official part of these minutes as Attachment #3).

Brian Dowd, Deputy Executive Director, Policy, Compliance and Operations, Medical Assistance Plans presented to the Board an informational update: Medical Assistance Plans, State Plan Amendment: Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) Rate Methodology Change Public Notice (revised).

At the October DCH Board meeting, the Board granted approval to move forward with the submission of a State Plan Amendment (SPA) increasing the rates at PRTFs. After the Board meeting, DCH submitted a SPA to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS in its review had some questions and edits that we responded to. One edit was related to the effective date of the SPA. While our intent was to make the SPA effective on September 15, 2023, CMS informed DCH that the earliest effective date DCH could make the State Plan effective is October 1, 2023.

Due to the change in the effective date, CMS has asked DCH to post a revised Public Notice informing the public and interested stakeholders of the new effective date. As there is no change to rate or rate methodology, DCH is not required to conduct another Board vote. For transparency, DCH wanted to make the Board aware and announce the revision in this Board meeting to the public.

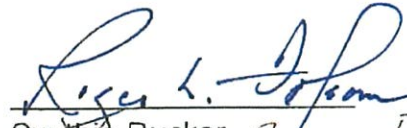
### **New Business/Closing Comments**

None to report.

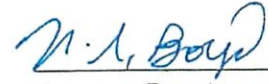
### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Chairman Norman Boyd adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

THESE MINUTES ARE HEREBY APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS THE 18<sup>th</sup> DAY OF January, 2024.

  
Cynthia Rucker  
Secretary

*Roger Folsom*

  
Norman Boyd  
Chairman

Official Attachments:

- #1 Agenda
- #2 List of Attendees
- #3 Medical Assistance Plans, 1115 Demonstration Amendment: Planning for Healthy Babies (P4HB) Demonstration Amendment Public Notice
- #4 Informational update: Medical Assistance Plans, State Plan Amendment: Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) Rate Methodology Change Public Notice (revised)