



---

2 Peachtree Street, NW | Atlanta, GA 30303-3159 | 404-656-4507 | [www.dch.georgia.gov](http://www.dch.georgia.gov)

STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH  
February 16, 2017

Present: Robin Rau, Member  
Kay Floyd, Member  
Carla Belcher, Member  
Ann Addison, Member  
Sheila Ramer, Member  
O.J. Booker, Member  
LaDon Toole, Member  
Ajay Gehlot, Member

SORH Staff: Patsy Whaley, SORH Executive Director, Ex-Officio  
Sheryl McCoy, Board Recording Secretary  
Lisa Carhuff, SORH  
David Glass, SORH  
Dawn Waldrip, SORH

Absent: Jennie Wren Denmark, Member  
Stuart Tedders, Member

Visitors: Frank Berry, DCH Commissioner  
Andrew Johnson, Deputy Commissioner  
Kate Pfirman, Deputy Commissioner  
Joseph Hood, Deputy Commissioner  
Lisa Marie Shekell, Director of Communications & Legislative Affairs  
Marial Ellis, General Counsel  
Lisa Walker, CFO

***Opening Remarks:***

The meeting was called to order by O.J. Booker, Vice-Chairperson SORH Advisory Board, in the absence of Jennie Wren Denmark, Chairperson.

O.J. asked for the approval of the minutes and they were approved as submitted.

O.J. asked for introductions of members and visitors so that the members and visitors could become acquainted.

The first agenda item was David Glass, Director, Primary Care Office (PCO), who presented on the function and delivery system of the PCO office. The PCO program is funded through a cooperative agreement with



**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

*SORH Advisory Board Minutes*

*October 6, 2016*

*Page | 2*

HRSA to improve primary care service delivery and workforce availability to meet the needs of the State's underserved populations. The HRSA PCO Cooperative Agreement is funded \$230,203 for the FY 2016/2017. The primary function of the PCO consists of the following:

- Development of Primary Care Access Points
  - Federally Qualified Health Centers
  - Rural Health Clinics
  - School-Based Telehealth Centers
  
- Shortage Designation Coordination
  - Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA)
  - Medically Underserved Areas (MUA)
  - Rural Health Clinic and Other Facility HPSAs
  
- Provider Recruitment
  - National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program
  - NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program
  - GA30 – J – 1 Visa Waiver Program
  - 3RNet National Recruiting Network (3RNet.org)
  
- The PCO also manages a grant that funds Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)
  - Recruits people into health care system

The entire powerpoint is available upon request.

After lunch Commissioner Berry and the Executive Staff spoke about their roles at DCH and the vision going forward for the next few years. He explained that they understand the importance of supporting all the divisions of the department and the task to bring it into one cooperative team. The only way to understand the challenges of the department is to visit all the counties in Georgia. He gave a brief history of his past work and how his experiences brought him to where he is today, DCH Commissioner.

Commissioner Berry acknowledged the very capable Executive Leaders Team. Joe Hood, Deputy Commissioner, has previously worked for the Department of Public Safety, Kate Pfirman has 14 years of health care experience at various agencies, Andrew Johnson, Deputy Commissioner, previously work with Commissioner Berry for four years and has worked for a physician member of Congress, Marial Ellis, General Counsel, has held the position since 2013 and previously worked at the Department of Human Services. Her expertise in law gives great guidance and insight to the legal issues. Lisa Walker worked in the Office of Planning and Budget and now works at DCH as Chief Financial Officer and Lisa Marie Shekell works at DCH in Communications and Legislative Affairs and is a tremendous asset to the department by her responsiveness to legislators. Each member of the team has a tremendous amount of expertise in their various professional areas. The knowledge they bring from other agencies, as well as the Governor's office, helps bring a new and fresh perspective to the Department.

Commissioner Berry shared that the department touches every person in Georgia. Every person in Georgia touches health care individually or through a family member. Not only do we touch lives through direct health care but also through monitoring and auditing quality and access to health care.



**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

*SORH Advisory Board Minutes*

*October 6, 2016*

*Page | 3*


For the next 20 months the expectation is to figure out ways to make the department work more efficiently, to work with other departments, help individuals get greater access to care, and ways the dollars the General Assembly and the Governor allocate to the department can be used in the most effective way possible.


He was complimentary of the SORH office under the leadership of Patsy Whaley and was interested in learning more and finding better ways to support the office.

Patsy expressed appreciation to the Commissioner and the Executive Leaders Team for taking the time out of their busy schedules to come meet with the SORH Advisory Board. The SORH office is excited about the DCH Finance Department arranging education for the SORH office in the next few weeks and looking forward to other educational training in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectively,

  
Chairman

  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary