

Board of Supervisors Health and Human Services Committee
October 17, 2023, 1:30-3 p.m.
Fairfax County Government Center Conference Room 11

Meeting Summary

Board Members Present:

Jeffrey McKay, Chairman; Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman); Dalia Palchik, Providence District (Committee Chairman); Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District; John Foust, Dranesville District; Patrick Herrity, Springfield District; Rodney Lusk, Franconia District; Kathy Smith, Sully District; Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon District; and James Walkinshaw, Braddock District.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Supervisor Palchik opened with a review of the meeting agenda. The HHS Committee Chairman also acknowledged the ongoing work and research which will result in recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on rent relief at a future committee meeting.

Item 1. Medicaid Unwinding

The first item was a presentation on Medicaid unwinding, which requires the Department of Family Services to conduct eligibility redeterminations on all Medicaid cases now that the federal public health emergency is over. Michael Becketts, Director, Department of Family Services (DFS), Alycia Blackwell, Deputy Director, DFS, and Lisa Tatum, Division Director, DFS presented an update on the status of Medicaid unwinding in Fairfax County. Information was shared on caseload volume, workload requirements, resource management, and continuity of coverage. DFS' Medicaid Unwinding Strategic and Implementation Committee (MUSIC) developed an operational plan for this enormous undertaking. States have up to 12 months after April 1, 2023 to initiate all redeterminations. As of October 1, 2023, Fairfax County has completed 33.8% of renewals and is on target to meet the deadline.

DFS has engaged County and community partners on the unwinding process and developed digital and print materials that were sent to all residents enrolled in Medicaid. DFS has also been collaborating with its state partners, Virginia Department of Social Services and the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services on policy changes and compliance.

Board members commended DFS on this work and asked questions about eligibility, coordination with community partners, process improvements, and outreach.

Item 2. Youth Behavioral Health Update

The second agenda item was an update on youth behavioral health, which was presented by Daryl Washington, Executive Director of the Community Services Board (CSB). Highlights from the 2022-2023 Youth Survey results were shared on mental health and substance use. The most recent survey data on stress, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideations, and suicide attempts showed a decrease from last year. Fairfax County youth reported lower rates of use for most substances than the national average and usage is trending down. It was noted that youth who reported substance use had higher rates of suicidal ideations, depressive symptoms, and attempted suicides.

Data from the CSB's FY 2023 annual report on youth behavioral health services was also presented, as well as information about the expansion of youth outpatient services and youth medication assisted treatment. The planning efforts to develop a standalone youth regional crisis receiving center were outlined. Information about the \$155.6 million in new state funding for CSBs was also shared.

Board members asked questions about the County's expected allocation of new state funding, workforce recruitment, locations for the crisis receiving center, and planned improvements to accessing treatment.

Item 3. Extreme Heat Response Plan

The third agenda item was an update on the Extreme Heat Response Plan, which was presented by Tom Barnett, Deputy Director, Department of Housing and Community Development, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness and Jill Clark, HHS Policy and Planning Manager, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. The background on the plan's development and key elements were provided. Data was presented on activation dates and cooling center usage, as well as the distribution of over 27,000 items at 62 County cooling centers and community partner sites.

The NAACP conducted a follow-up survey in July 2023 to determine the effectiveness of the Extreme Heat Response Plan. Debriefs with the Extreme Heat Workgroup and participating County agencies were held in September 2023. The feedback received from the survey and debriefs will be used to make future enhancements. Additional outreach will also be conducted to increase residents' awareness of the plan and resources available during extreme heat.

Board members shared their appreciation for this work and asked questions about regional coordination, shelter bed capacity, communication and outreach strategies, utilization rates, and activation trigger points.

Adjourn

The committee meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.