**NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ADVISORY & ISSUES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE: March 9, 2022**

**TIME: 8:30**

**LOCATION:** Zoom webinar

**ATTENDEES; Robby Hall (Co Chair), Christine Dowdell (Apprentice),**

Angela Ellis, Andrey Jones, Amy Pridgen-Hamlet, April Snead, Angela Wall, Charles Lycett,

Cheri Blount, Geoffrey Marett, Elizabeth Huff, Felicia Exum, Felissa Ferrell, Glenn Osborne, Heather Skeens, Jacqueline McKnight, Karen Mace, Kathy Ford, KC Harrington, Kim McGuire,

Kody Krebs, LaDawn Pearson, Laurie Potter, La Verne Bennett, LeCorey McCrary, Lula

Jackson, Marcy Mays, Misti Merritt, Rebecca Wilson, Robby Hall, Sharon Barlow, Sharnese Ransome, Sheila Brosier, Sheila Conley, Susan Chaney, Tammy Schrenker, Tony Carpenter,

Tracie Murphy, Trena Riddle, Trish Baker, Wendy Boone, Wes Stewart, Willie Smith III,

Jessica Wall, Yvette Smith, Vivian Tookes

**WELCOME**

Geoffrey Marett opened the meeting and welcomed everyone via virtual Zoom.

**APPROVE MINUTES (February 9, 2022)**

The meeting minutes for February 9, 2022, were sent to everyone with the agenda. Mr. Marett asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

* + - **Motion Offered By:**  Christine M. Dowdell
    - **Motion Seconded By:**  Angela Ellis
    - **Motion Carried:** Yes

Mr. Marett asked for committee members to introduce themselves. Ms. Ransome encouraged all meeting attendees to add the name of the county they represent when signing in for the meeting.

Currently, Ms. Ransom has been working on the April meeting and it is not listed as a topic because of the full agenda. The plan is to add it to the May agenda in order to have more time for small group discussions who will report out.

Ms. Ransome agreed that it would be better to discuss in the focus group sessions at the annual meeting because there are so many topics at the regular board meeting. Ms. Ransome will send an email to them between meetings today. She also shared that when there are small groups at an annual meeting, there will be time to really engage and hear from counties based on size and population. Then they will be able to give a more thoughtful report out that can be used with Legislature.

* **Medicaid Expansion**

This COOP is off and running, they have had 2 meetings and the 3rd meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2022 which is a non-standing committee. If you go to committee sub section on the NC General Assembly page, you can subscribe so you will be notified regarding upcoming meetings. Mr. Marett shared that if you would like to see the committees, you can go to the webpage.

Mr. Hall shared that the annual meeting is not a bad idea and that there have been separate meetings in the past for this sole purpose by web or in person. It was done for Food Stamps, and NCFAST. Ms. Ransom shared that this was thought about; however, for two days in March there will be professional development and in early April there will be New Director’s orientation for three days followed by the meeting week which was the reason for planning it during the annual meeting.

Since advocacy plans to meet every Monday, we can share with our members that we will be working on this during the meetings. The committee meeting can be used for that purpose. It was requested for Ms. Ransome to be able to reach out and see if the May meeting will be too late. If it is too late we would report back to the group.

* **Mental Health Meeting Update**

Mr. Hall shared that he has reached out to a couple of LMEs’. The response has been good and they are interested in meeting especially since the plan was moved back for another year. Right now, the idea is to get the letter out within the next week or two weeks after a discussion with each of them around how the group would meet and what will be discussed. During the first meeting in May, they will work around other meetings. Mr. Hall thanked everyone for sending the contacts for the LMEs, and said it was very helpful.

Mr. Osborne shared that one of the suggestions that he made at the Eastern Regional Director’s meeting with the LME/MOC staff is to periodically meet with them and have a standing committee to formalize the relationship. He suggested having a few directors to meet with the LME/MCO leadership in their own areas then the groups will come together for a state wide meeting a couple times during the year. An agenda can be created for the collaborative work. The number one goal that should be established with them is to look at what is working well within the LME/MCO then work toward the goal of making it state wide. Consistency around the good work and best practice that is going on needs to be developed. The second goal is working together to build better capacity.

Recently, communication from a particular LME/MCO was received about their thoughts on consolidation into one special plan for children in the foster care system. We want to be sure that this particular LME/MCO does not try to convince the director’s association to go down a path that would take us back to where we were one year ago, when there was a struggle to get the services for the children in care. We can individually decide as a county if we want to support that plan; however, as far as an association we need to be sure we are not in conflict with what was decided a year ago.

Mr. Hall hopes that this doesn’t turn into an individual county or provider wish list. It should be more about working together. It was also mentioned if they will be willing to meet once a year with the director’s international catchment area. Mr. Hall stated that he understood Glenn’s position and stated that was the original request purposed. After a lengthy discussion this method was settled on. Mr. Hall stated that he could go either way. The plan is to bring together first and prepare in advance. It is not about not supporting the association, it’s about getting the LME and the state to actually produce the results that are stated in the letter. He has broken the letter apart trying to match the progress in any of those areas and is ready to move forward with the letter that starts with the subcommittee.

There was discussion that was held in regional one director’s meeting went extremely well with the LME’s. It was interesting to see all of the work that is being done across the state for children in that population. Not all LMEs are the same. Some of the programs are unique to areas because of the challenges that they have already met. In the deep far west they already have the case managers in the county agencies working directly with the staff. One of the struggles is trying to get the LMEs into consistent programs throughout the state. The challenge is that it may be applicable to every region. There was discussion about surveying the programs. The question is what has made an impact as a result of this program. It would be nice to see what the matrices are so the program can be evaluated. It would be great to have case managers in the counties that are struggling with placements.

Mr. Garret stated that he understood and he thinks the issue that was being discussed already were universal; for example, crisis beds. He stated that there is no way to tackle every issue with mental health since there are so many pieces to it at one time; however, there needs to be a starting point. There should be the same treatment of DSS agencies regardless of the catchment area.

It is good to have the general discussions to let the LME’s know the expectations. If the LME’s want the overall support from the association or the region, they have to meet the minimum standards that we have set in place; otherwise, it is the same. Some of the counties are going to meet with their LME’s separately.

Ms. Ransome reported that she sent both letters regarding the specialty plan again on Monday (the first white paper and the second response). Mr. Marett shared that he sent the letters to his county manager. Ms. Ransom added that if you are not careful they will make assumptions if you only list three things in a document. The issues need to be open and transparent and part of the education needs to be around who actually does the placements. She recommends consulting with your governing bodies and your legal counsel in order to avoid getting trapped in a situation.

Mr. Harris shared that he wondered if this would be the state’s opportunity to eliminate LME’s and what the system would look like when calling Blue Cross or one of the PCP’s.

In the beginning it was to eliminate or reduce the LME’s and shift over to privatization. If you look at the research, this consolidation for saving money not for improving outcomes.

Ms. Potter shared that she thought there was a discussion regarding telling your own story.

Ms. Ransome announced that the monthly reports are being added to the website. You should be able to pull information out to share with your legislature. She shared that some do a good job sharing your monthly reports with your governing bodies, boards and community partners. When you do that, it tells your story and people are more apt. to defend you. Articles printed in the newspaper serve little value. When you tell the story on return investment, like how many families you have served is the good part and it is what you want to get out. For those who send reports, Ms. Bennet loads them onto the website. Ms. Ransome also had annual reports from counties added to the website. She encouraged everyone to continue sharing the information. The bi-weekly newsletter is added as well.

It was stated the Mr. Osborne made a great comment which is what advocacy is all about; making sure we are relevant at our level. Relevancy means that relationships have to be built.

Mr. Marett thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

Mr. Marett announced beginning Monday, 3/21/22 the advocacy meetings will continue weekly to discuss the Medicaid Expansion and the White Paper. He will follow up with and email to everyone.

**Stakeholder Engagement Discussions**

**MEETING ADJOURNED**: With nothing else to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:30am.

**NEXT MEETING:**

**DATE:** April 13, 2022

**TIME:** 8:30 am

**LOCATION:** ZOOM webinar