



NCACBSS Newsletter

NC Association of County Boards of Social Services

“Charting the Path for the Future”

2021 Spring Newsletter

Mary S. Accor-1st Vice-President/Editor

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Spring is a time for renewal, growth, and teamwork; we feel it in the air! Even though we can experience growth any time during the year, it feels especially right to do it during Spring, when we seem to have that extra energy and focus to get physically active, work hard, and create positive change. As we move forward, in what seemingly looks to be a “little light” at the end of what has been a “turbulent” tunnel, we are excited about continuing the work of advocating for our DSS departments across North Carolina, and planning for the Annual SSI...Our slate of officers and directors are in place, and poised to make lasting decisions that will positively impact the mission of our association.....

if you watch how nature deals with adversity, continually renewing itself, you can't help but learn.
— Heron Singer MD



Welcome Spring!



We Appreciate our Essential Workers!!!!!!

We are looking forward to seeing you in Hickory, North Carolina,
at the SOCIAL SERVICES INSTITUTE (SSI),
August 4-5, 2021!



COVID-19 Cases Declining Rapidly in North Carolina Long-Term Care Settings

Many Facilities Can Resume Visitation

Raleigh
Mar 4, 2021

New COVID-19 cases in North Carolina long-term care facilities have declined rapidly in the last several weeks. Case rates are down over 15-fold in skilled nursing facilities, adult care homes and other licensed facilities since the peak of transmission in January 2021. Given the rapid decline in new cases, most facilities currently meet criteria to resume indoor visitation while continuing to follow infection prevention recommendations.

The rapid declines in case numbers can be attributed to early [vaccination](#) prioritization for residents and staff of long-term care facilities and decreasing community transmission. More than 205,000 vaccines have been [administered to long-term care staff and residents](#), and vaccinations through the federal long-term care partnership for COVID-19 vaccinations will continue into March.

"Protecting our residents and staff in long-term care has been a top priority in our pandemic response efforts and seeing cases decrease in these settings is heartening," said NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "I know it has been a long, difficult year for residents and families, but those measures saved lives and are now allowing us to resume safe, indoor visitation. While we need to continue infection prevention practices, this decrease is also a positive sign of the impact vaccinations have in our communities."

The declining number of cases in long-term care settings means many facilities can resume indoor visitation. While facilities may conduct visits at any time for residents with compassionate care needs, federal and state guidelines have additional criteria for facilities to resume indoor visitation, which include following infection prevention practices and having no new cases of COVID-19 in the last 14 days. Medicare certified skilled-nursing facilities must meet additional criteria required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Since the start of the pandemic, NCDHHS's [response](#) has focused on a five-point strategy for [long-term care facilities](#) including prevention, staffing, testing, outbreak management and oversight. The state has created regional infection prevention teams to support facilities; provided personal protective equipment; helped fill staffing shortages; provided infection prevention and control training, provided targeted funding; mandated testing; and completed on-site infection control inspections of North Carolina's more than 400 nursing homes.

To continue to reduce community transmission of COVID-19, North Carolinians should continue to practice the three W's — [Wait, Wear Wash](#) — and, when they become [eligible for the vaccine, get vaccinated](#).

NCDHHS Launches Statewide Open Enrollment for NC Medicaid Managed Care

Raleigh
Mar 15, 2021

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services today announced the launch of statewide open enrollment for NC Medicaid Managed Care. Beneficiaries can enroll [online](#), by calling the NC Medicaid Managed Care Call Center at 833-870-5500 (TTY: 833-870-5588) or through the free NC Medicaid Managed Care mobile app available on [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#). They can also use the mail-in forms sent to them in the enrollment packet.

"With the start of NC Medicaid Managed Care open enrollment, families now have the chance to make important decisions about their health care to prepare for managed care launch in July," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "There are many resources available to help families select the health plans and providers that best meet their specific needs."

The [NC Medicaid Managed Care website](#) offers a wide variety of tools and information to assist beneficiaries in choosing a primary care provider (PCP) and a health plan for their families' care. Tools include frequently asked questions, a chat function, the Medicaid and NC Health Choice

Provider and Health Plan Lookup Tool with four categories of search capabilities, advanced search based on specialty and the ability to view all providers within an organization/location and by practice name.

Most people who receive Medicaid can choose from [five health plans](#) as part of the state's transition to managed care. Some people will not need to choose a health plan because of the type of health services they need. All health plans are required to have the same Medicaid services, such as office visits, blood tests and X-rays. Health plans each have their own network of qualified doctors and health care professionals. Health plans also have added services such as educational assistance and programs to have a healthy pregnancy. People can choose a PCP from their health plan's network to deliver their families' Medicaid services.

The [Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians \(EBCI\) Tribal Option](#) is an additional managed care option, and the first Indian Managed Care Entity in the nation that is available for federally recognized Tribal members and individuals eligible to receive services through the Indian Health Service.

Open enrollment ends May 14, 2021. Beneficiaries who enroll with a health plan during open enrollment will have the opportunity to select a PCP from a list of contracted providers. If they do not choose a health plan before May 14, one will be assigned to them by NC Medicaid. In the first 90 days after their coverage effective date, beneficiaries can change health plans for any reason. After that, unless there is a special reason, beneficiaries cannot change health plans until the next Medicaid recertification date.

For more information, beneficiaries can reference the enrollment packets that were mailed to them, visit the [NC Medicaid Managed Care website](#) or call the NC Medicaid Managed Care Call Center at 833-870-5500 (TTY: 833-870-5588).

Richard Petty on COVID-19 Vaccines:

“You Have A Spot. Take Your Shot.”

Raleigh

Mar 16, 2021

North Carolina native and NASCAR Hall of Famer Richard Petty recently received a COVID-19 vaccine.

The seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion, and all-time leader in premier series race wins with 200, Petty was vaccinated at a drive-through vaccination center located near his hometown of Level Cross, N.C.

In a [public service announcement](#) released by the [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services](#), Petty, 83, shares his reasons for getting vaccinated and urges others to find their spot and take their shot.



“I talked to my doctor, and he highly recommended that I go ahead and get a shot,” Petty said. “It doesn’t only help me; it helps my family and all of the people I associate with. You are not only helping yourself; you are helping your neighbors.”

Petty recorded the PSA in partnership with NCDHHS as part of the state’s [Your Spot Your Shot](#) COVID-19 public education campaign. To date, more than 1.2 million North Carolinians are fully vaccinated.

From the [Richard Petty Museum](#) in Randleman, N.C., Petty shares he was somewhat reluctant early on but the science, matched with the advice of his physician, prompted him to get vaccinated.

“I might have been a little bit hesitant to begin with, but after looking at all of the statistics — I don’t see anything after you take the shot,” Petty said. “Everyone seems to get along with it pretty good.”

“You have a spot. Take your shot.”



NCDHHS Expands Demographic Data on Vaccine Dashboard

(Link: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/vaccinations>)

Raleigh
Mar 9, 2021



The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has expanded its [vaccine data dashboard](#) to provide more demographic data on people who are partially or fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Users will be able to see vaccinations by race, ethnicity, gender and age group by county, by week and since vaccinations began. The information will be displayed on a new tab named “Demographics” on the dashboard.

The new Demographics page will allow people to see week-to-week progress statewide and by county. The charts on this page can be filtered to show:

- Of the vaccines administered each week what percent were administered by race, ethnicity, age group and gender. The data can be viewed by percent of people at least partially vaccinated and percent of people fully vaccinated. A cumulative total is also presented.
- The percent of the population by race, ethnicity, age group and gender that has been partially or fully vaccinated. A cumulative total is also presented.

The Vaccination Summary also includes new information, including:

- Percent of population at least partially vaccinated
- Percent of population fully vaccinated
- Single shot doses allocated by federal government, arrived in North Carolina, total doses administered and percent arrived doses administered for both NC providers and the Federal Long-Term Care program

North Carolina has been recognized for the quality and transparency of its vaccine data dashboard. For the second week in a row, [Bloomberg News](#) scored North Carolina as best in the nation on data quality, reporting race and ethnicity data for nearly 100 percent of people vaccinated in the state.

Data by demographics do not currently include information on doses that have been administered in NC through federal programs. Percent of population metrics are calculated using the entire NC population (i.e., all ages). When a county has a population of fewer than 500 individuals for a specific demographic group, some data are suppressed to protect patient privacy. Data shown are preliminary and may change. There can be a 72-hour lag in data reported to NCDHHS.

Other information:

March 11

- Governor Roy Cooper and NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen announced beginning on March 17, people in [Group 4](#) who have a medical condition that puts them at higher risk of serious illness and people who live in certain congregate settings will be eligible for vaccination. The rest of Group 4, which includes other essential workers will become eligible April 7.

March 9

- NCDHHS expanded its [vaccine data dashboard](#) to provide more demographic data on people who are partially or fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Users will be able to see vaccinations by race, ethnicity, gender and age group by county, by week and since vaccinations began.

Celebrating Women's History Month!



[North Carolina WIC Program Receives Telehealth Intervention Strategies Grant](#)

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021

The North Carolina Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is one of seven WIC State Agencies to receive a U.S. Department of Agriculture/Tufts Telehealth Intervention Strategies for WIC (THIS-WIC) grant. Selected through a competitive review process, the \$1 million grant will use innovative telehealth solutions to deliver nutrition education and breastfeeding support to WIC participants to overcome barriers to access, particularly those encountered in rural settings.



NCACBSS BOARD MEETING

Friday, March 19, 2021

The Cutting Board

2699 Ramada Road

Burlington, N.C.

10:00 am-2:00 pm

NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY BOARDS OF
SOCIAL SERVICES
QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING
AGENDA

President Betsy Wells, Presiding
(Betsy's email: Betsyncacbsspres@hotmail.com)

- 10:00 Welcome / Introductions /Approval of Agenda
Betsy Wells, President
- 10:15 NC DHHS Information - Susan Osborne, Asst Sec. of County
Operations, DHHS
- NCADSS & Advocacy Updates - Sharnese Ransome, NCADSS Executive
Director Information about the General Assembly
- 11:15 Updates Board Members
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 Minutes Tara Fikes, Secretary
- 12.55 Treasurer's Report /Financial Questions- Jim Sides, Treasurer
- 1:00 By-Laws & 2021 Committees – Jim Sides and Betsy Wells
- 1:20 Nominating Committee /Terms of NCACBSS Officers & Directors
Betsy Wells and Board
- 1:45 Newsletter Mary Accor, Editor/ 1st Vice-President
- 1:50 Burning Issues Betsy Wells and Board
- 2:00 Adjournment





Meet Franklin County's DSS Security Officer...



John Simmons

Security Officer John Simmons has provided security coverage for the Franklin County Human Services Building for the past three and one-half years. Officer Simmons is employed by Allied Universal Security Services. His almost thirty-two-year career has included the Department of Corrections, juvenile justice, mental health, and private duty protection services. His prior experience has proven him to be a tremendous asset to the Department of Social Services. He is always upbeat and positive.

Since the onset of COVID-19, the Social Services Department has had limited public facing operations, thereby changing customers normal access to services. The usual face-to-face interaction with staff has been reduced. Numerous alternatives are in place to ensure that all customer needs are addressed. The entry foyer provides a table with all necessary forms, applications, contact numbers, notices, and other pertinent information. With Officer Simmons' desk located in the foyer, he found himself fielding questions and inquiries regarding current operations. He readily assisted, becoming familiar with the general services provided by the Department, and proving to be a valuable ambassador to the Department.

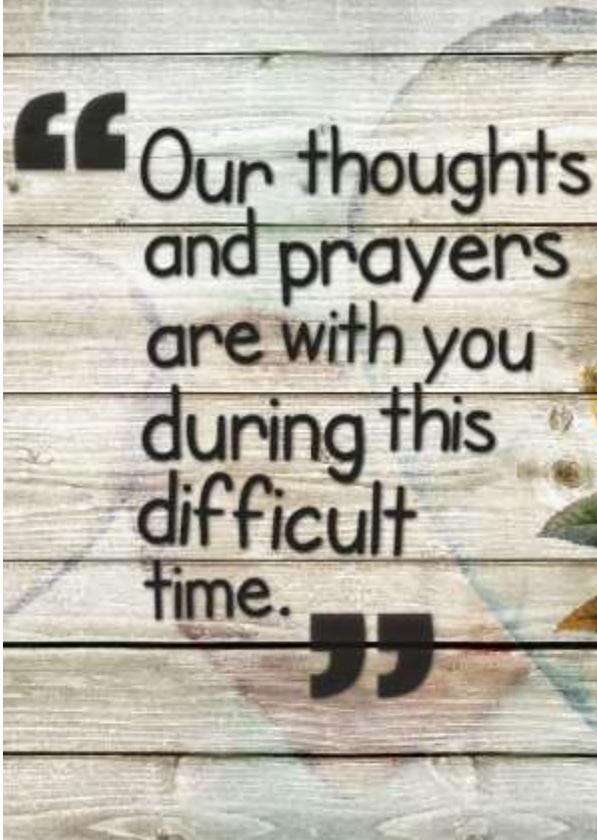
Officer Simmons indicates the best part of his day is helping and assisting. The joy of knowing staff can come to work and feel safe by knowing they are in a secure environment is particularly important to him. "This career is my passion, and I will always place staffs' safety and security over my own; this is my calling to protect and serve others and puts a smile on my face" indicates Officer Simmons.

Further comments from Officer Simmons express it is an honor and pleasure to work at Franklin County Department of Social Services. "The staff here have always made me feel welcomed and appreciated from day one just to see the smiles and hear the 'THANK YOUs' from staff regardless of whether they are coming in or leaving makes me want to do a better job each day". Officer Simmons is very appreciative of the support from the Director of Social Services, Mrs. Nicki Perry, and administrative staff, as he feels they appreciate his work, value his knowledge, skills, and abilities.

MANY THANKS OFFICER SIMMONS FOR ALL THAT YOU DO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(Special Thanks to NCACBSS/Franklin County DSS Board Member, Monty Riggs, for submitting this awesome news article)

The NCACBSS Officers and Directors salute your service!



*Our condolences are being sent to
NEACBSS Board Member, and
Vance County Commissioner
Archie Taylor, on the passing of
his beloved wife of 60 years....*

*Jacquelynn Devond
Rhodes Taylor*

12.21.1941-10.21.2020

*Our thoughts and prayers are with
Archie and his family during this
difficult time.*



NC Association of County Boards of Social Services

2020-2021 NCACBSS Officers:

President: Betsy Wells--Cleveland Co
1st Vice President: Mary Accor—Cleveland Co
2nd Vice President: Clayton Gaskins—Craven Co
Secretary: Tara Fikes--Durham Co
Treasurer: Jim Sides--Rowan Co



Officers and Directors

Regional Directors:

- Region I: 1. Mark West—Macon Co
- 2. Jennifer Hensley—Henderson Co
- 3. Mary Accor--Cleveland Co
- Region II: 4. Dr Greg Minton--Wilkes Co
- 5. Jim Sides--Rowan Co
- 6. Richard Wagner-Davidson Co
- Region III: 7. Tom Collie—Franklin Co
- 8. Ray Jeffers—Person Co
- 9. Gloria White—Vance Co
- Region IV: 10. Archie Taylor--Vance Co
- 11. Jim Cox--Pitt Co
- 12. Monty Riggs—Franklin Co
- Region V: 13. Deborah Morrison--Hertford Co
- 14. Clayton Gaskin--Craven Co
- 15. Frankie Roberts--New Hanover Co



REGION 1

Director 1 Mark West
Cherokee
Clay
Graham
Swain
Macon
Jackson
Transylvania
Haywood

Director 2 Jennifer Hensley
Henderson
Polk
Rutherford
McDowell
Buncombe
Madison
Yancey

Director 3 Mary Accor
Cleveland
Caldwell
Mitchell
Avery
Watauga
Burke
Catawba

REGION II

Director 4 Dr Greg Minton
Ashe
Alleghany
Surry
Wilkes
Alexander
Davie
Yadkin

Director 5 James B. Sides
Iredell
Lincoln
Gaston
Mecklenburg
Cabarrus
Rowan

Director 6 Richard Wagner
Stokes
Rockingham
Forsyth
Guilford
Davidson
Randolph

REGION III

Director 7 Tom Collie
Stanley
Montgomery
Moore
Union
Anson
Richmond

Director 8 Ray Jeffers
Caswell
Person
Alamance
Orange
Durham
Chatham
Lee

Director 9 Gloria
Harnett
Cumberland
Bladen
Scotland
Hoke
Robeson



REGION IV

Director 10 Archie Taylor
Granville
Vance
Franklin
Warren
Halifax
Northampton

Director 11 Jim Cox
Wake
Nash
Wilson
Edgecombe
Pitt
Martin

Director 12 Monty Riggs
Johnston
Wayne
Greene
Lenoir
Sampson
Duplin
Jones

REGION V

Director 13 Deborah Morrison
Currituck
Camden
Perquimans
Pasquotank
Gates
Herford
Bertie

Director 14 Clayton Gaskins
Washington
Tyrell
Dare
Hyde
Craven
Pamlico

Director 15 Frankie Roberts
Carteret
Onslow
Pender
New Hanover
Columbus



NC General Assembly Social Services Consortium Legislative Priorities:

- 1. Provide adequate funding at the local departments of social services for adult protective services and guardianship. Ensure greater protection of this population by evaluating current state laws while also improving behavioral health services for vulnerable, older and disabled adults.***
- 2. Amend applicable General Statutes regarding Medicaid Eligibility Determination and apply a cap for claims against county departments of social services. Ensure a state level appeals process prior to an assessment for reimbursement.***
- 3. Preserve Federal and State Block Grants for county administered programs (TANF, SSBG, CSBG, CCDBG, HCCBG), oppose unfunded mandates, and prevent unnecessary workload increases to counties (including shifting state responsibilities to counties)***
- 4. Ask the General Assembly to support the findings of the Working Group.***

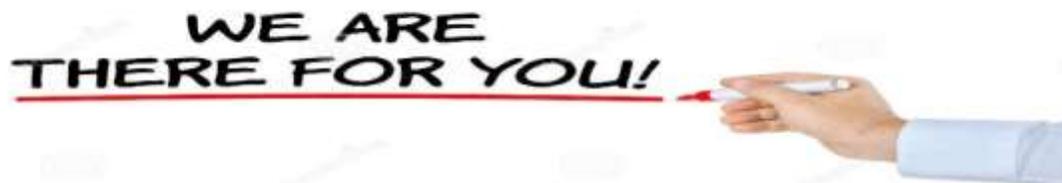
WHY SHOULD WE JOIN NCACBSS?

A: Member Benefits

- Opportunity to become part of a coalition of members to help support or defeat legislation, as deemed appropriate, during the legislative sessions.
- Access educational training programs.
- Participation in an information network for members regarding issues affecting the administration and financing of social services programs.
- Participation in a forum for exchanging of information and ideas among fellow County Board Members.
- Access to tools and help aids to local County Board Members.
- Access to Newsletter distribution
- Access to the website, including exclusive member-only content, for easy access to pertinent information.
- Response to member needs via a strategic plan.
- Access to your county representative on the Board to share ideas, bring issues, and share best practices.
- Access to LBR resources.
- Access to advocates



A special **“Welcome Back”** to our returning DSS Boards!



Words of Encouragement...Be Safe...Stay Healthy!



**We need
YOU!**



to send information
(good news, department
accolades, association
updates)
to
msaccor@carolina.rr.com
#NCACBSSTRONG



Next Newsletter
Deadline:
May 10, 2021