

**HANOVER COUNTY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
January 28, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Cornelius called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Board Members present: Bernadette Cornelius; Page Sening; Sheila Crossen-Powell; Vandl Hodges; Dan Johnson; Alice Miller; Jamie Radtke

Absent: Ed Gooding; Faye Prichard

Also in attendance: Jim Taylor, Deputy County Administrator; Lisa Seward, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Karin Adams, Systems Administrator; Les Beasley, Budget Management Analyst; Ginny Ferguson, Quality Assurance Coordinator; Daricka Jones, Benefit Programs Manager; Jennifer DeVaughn, Benefit Programs Specialist; and Robin Riley, Administrative Assistant.

Ms. Cornelius asked that everyone introduce themselves to the new Board members, and welcomed Ms. Hodges, Mr. Johnson, and Ms. Miller to the SSAB.

II. CITIZEN'S COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Johnson announced that a public forum about the DASH program would be held February 5, 2020 at Parks & Rec in Montpelier. Ms. Susan Richards will be the spokesperson.

III. INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Ms. Jones introduced Ms. DeVaughn, Benefit Programs Specialist, who was formerly with Chesterfield DSS. Ms. DeVaughn previously worked in other Hanover agencies and also grew up in Hanover.

Dr. Crossen-Powell said that we hope to have a new CPS worker by the next meeting. The Systems Administrator, Ms. Karin Adams, will be retiring May 1, 2020. Her position will be advertised, although it will be difficult to replace her. The Board thanked Ms. Adams, and Mr. Taylor congratulated her.

IV. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 19, 2019 MINUTES

Ms. Sening moved to approve the November 19, 2019 SSAB meeting minutes. Ms. Hodges seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

V. FEBRUARY IS ELIGIBILITY APPRECIATION MONTH

Recognition Letter from the Board to Benefit Programs Specialists

Ms. Cornelius read the letter, and Dr. Crossen-Powell asked the Board for approval. Mr. Johnson moved to approve the letter recognizing Benefit Programs Specialists and February, 2020 as Eligibility Appreciation Month. Ms. Sening seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Ms. Cornelius signed the letter, and it was sent electronically to the HDSS Benefit Programs Specialist employees.

VI. MARCH IS SOCIAL WORK APPRECIATION MONTH

Recognition Letter from the Board to Family Services Specialists

Ms. Cornelius read the letter, and Dr. Crossen-Powell asked the Board for approval. Ms. Radtke moved to approve the letter recognizing Family Services Specialists and March, 2020 as Social Work Appreciation Month. Ms. Sening seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Ms. Cornelius signed the letter, and it will be sent electronically to the HDSS Family Services Specialist employees at the end of February, 2020.

VII. PRESENTATION: BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Copy of presentation sent to Board members January 29, 2020.)

Dr. Crossen-Powell introduced Ms. Jones, Benefit Programs Manager. Ms. Jones provided an overview of benefit programs and the assessment for eligibility process. Benefit Programs workers are currently serving 7,517 SNAP recipients, 160 TANF recipients, 11,104 Medical Assistance recipients, 15 Auxiliary Grant recipients, and 1,542 Energy Assistance households. The Benefit Programs division also works closely with the CPS, APS, and Foster Care units.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

The purpose of SNAP is to reduce hunger and increase food security. Benefits are issued electronically on a plastic EBT card that can be used in any retail store or other food vendor authorized by the USDA.

Of the 7,517 SNAP recipients being served, there are 3,271 children of which 1,030 are between the ages of 0-5. Of the 4,246 adults being served, 1,013 are between the ages of 25-34, and 466 are 65 years and older.

The ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents) part of the SNAP program covers individuals between the ages of 18-49 who are not disabled, deemed able to work, and are single without dependents. Effective October 10, 2019, VDSS agreed to serve all at-risk ABAWDS by placing them in a qualifying component that includes work, education, and training activities. If they do not participate, only six months of benefits can be received. Five new questions have been added to the intake interview:

- What are your personal employment or education training goals for the next 3 years?
- What are your strengths?
- What do you need to reach your goals?
- What are barriers or obstacles to reaching your goal?
- What can you do to get around these barriers?

Mr. Johnson asked if we coordinate with the public school system. This is not done for adults, but we do work with VA community colleges. There is special federal funding to pay for training courses. DSS also has an employment services program and is coordinating with Workforce Alliance.

TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)

Some of the purposes of the TANF program include providing financial assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or homes of relatives and ending the dependence of parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

Assistance under TANF is a money payment in the form of a check, direct deposit, or debit card. As of December, 2019, HDSS has 160 TANF recipients of whom 125 are children and 35 are adults. Adults are the payee for the child. Ms. Radtke asked how payments go to the children.

Mr. Johnson asked how the money is monitored to ensure it is actually being used for the children. We have a fraud investigator. The average payment is \$197. DCSE pursues the absent parent when someone is receiving TANF.

Mr. Taylor asked how long is temporary? There is generally a five-year maximum amount of time. If the parent is able to work after a child is one-year old, they have to participate in VIEW.

Mr. Taylor asked how long people typically stay on TANF. The average is four years, and five years is the lifetime limit.

VDSS is anticipating that some of the bills listed below will pass in the 2020 session of the General Assembly:

- Multiple drug felon bills
- \$4000 per person for up to 200 TANF recipients to attend community college. This is for tuition cost for eligible TANF recipients.

Mr. Johnson asked about the stipulations. Ms. Jones said this bill is with the finance committee. As long as people are receiving TANF funding and are within 200 people, they will receive \$4000. VDSS signed an alliance with all community colleges. Ms. Jones will get more information and send to all.

- Eliminate the 2-year VIEW limit. If a person is actively receiving TANF and has been on it 10 months, and they have a child, they will not be eligible.
- Eliminate family cap provisions.
- Increase diversionary assistance to four months or \$1500, whichever is greater. The current maximum is about \$11-1200.

Governor's Budget:

- Increase the TANF allotment by \$10 monthly for female recipients age 13-55 to purchase feminine hygiene products.

Medical Assistance (Medicaid)

The medical assistance program was established to provide medical and health-related services for certain individuals and families with low incomes. As of December, 2019, we have 11,104 Medical Assistance enrollees in the following groups:

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|--------------|-------|---|
| • ABD: | 1,664 | ABD is for people in a nursing facility or receiving personal care in the home. |
| • LTC: | 421 | |
| • F&C: | 8,376 | |
| • FAMIS | | |
| Children | 627 | |
| • FAMIS Moms | 16 | |

Since Virginia expanded the Medicaid program in January, 2019, an additional 2,294 more Hanover County residents are now receiving Medicaid, an increase of 38%. The Dashboard count represents case numbers, not individuals. One case can be an entire family.

Energy Assistance

This program consists of three components:

- Fuel assistance which helps eligible households with costs of heating their home. This year's average household benefit was \$472, an increase from \$460 last year.

- Crisis assistance runs from December through March and helps households in heating emergency situations such as equipment repairs, security deposits, heating bills, primary heating fuel, or emergency shelter. The average payment is \$3-400, and income limits apply. The Crisis program is not yet complete.
- Cooling assistance helps with cooling equipment repairs or purchases and payment of the electric bill to operate cooling equipment. This year's maximum allotment was \$400. To qualify for cooling, there must be a child under six years old in the household or an elderly or disabled household member. Multiple bills can be submitted during the season up to the maximum allotment.

Energy Share is a program sponsored by Dominion Energy. It is a program of last resort for payment of heating or cooling bills when all other forms of assistance have been exhausted. The person(s) must be in a disconnection status, and assistance can only be provided once per season unless elderly or disabled. The maximum amounts allowable are up to \$300 for cooling and up to \$600 for fuel. From January, 2019 – December, 2019, 276 households were helped for a total of \$84,243.06.

Applications for benefits can be submitted over the phone at 855-635-4370, or on-line at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov with no need to come into the office.

Ms. Hodges said that some people are not good at asking for help like one gentleman who came into ACES this week. Ms. Jones recommended encouraging him to come in to DSS. We would need his permission for Ms. Hodges to speak with us. We cannot talk to anyone unless the client is there and authorizes a representative to speak on their behalf. Ms. Jones will provide some applications and her telephone number as a contact. People can come in to the lobby, and DSS staff will assist them with applying through CommonHelp.

DSS also refers people to WHEAT in the western part of the County. We have many partnerships and resources in Hanover. Ms. Ferguson added that we sit on committees including ACES, WHEAT and MCEF through the Hanover Food Network.

Ms. Cornelius thanked Ms. Jones for the information.

VIII. BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Beasley introduced himself and handed out information on the DSS FY20 Financial Update. He reviewed the year-to-date expenses, year-to-date expenses by quarter, year-end expense projections, summary, and the FY21 DSS budget request. Ms. Radtke asked about benefit programs under expense projections. If we spend as expected, we would expect to have about \$290,000 remaining in programs. Ms. Sening asked what is expected to be in variance. There are different splits. Dr. Crossen-Powell said that a lot of those programs are primarily administrative, and this information encompasses mostly service-related programs. The DSS budget request has changed very little, although the service-level plan threshold varies. This table excludes the FY 21 SLP request to include operating, new positions, or increase in hours. Personnel salaries and benefits data are not available at this time.

Dr. Crossen-Powell said that it is incumbent upon this Board to tell the Board of Supervisors (BoS) that you support this budget. The County Administrator will be presenting his budget to the BoS on February 12 which includes our budget. Mr. Taylor said the proposed budget has a small increase in salaries. It is being heard from the State that the Governor's

budget has some funds for DSS workers. A new position for DSS is included in the proposed budget for next year. Ms. Hodges asked if this will then need to be adjusted. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the money for DSS workers from the State would increase their share. Mr. Johnson asked what time should the Board members be there? The meeting begins at 2 p.m., and the County Administrator's information will be published the day after the meeting. Mr. Beasley added that the proposed budget is on the County web site. April 1st is the public hearing. Ms. Ratdke asked what percentage is being recommended and if that is on top of the State percentage. That information is not known at this time. Mr. Taylor said what usually happens is that the State says teachers have to be paid a certain amount, but we are already past that. If there is more money, it will be allocated to all. Dr. Crossen-Powell said the State contribution has increased a little. All federal money is called "pass-through". It comes from the federal government, then to the State, and is then passed to locals. Mr. Taylor said the issue with schools is not the same as Human Services. The State gave money to hire more staff for Medicaid Expansion. We will give out more information on the budget before the March meeting. Mr. Johnson asked if staff members will be in attendance on February 12. Dr. Crossen-Powell responded that some will be. Ms. Cornelius summarized:

- The County Administrator will present his budget on February 12;
- Information will be available February 13 for Mr. Beasley to analyze; and
- Information will be sent to the Board prior to the March meeting for review before the public hearing on April 1.

Ms. Cornelius thanked Mr. Beasley for the simplicity of the budget information. Ms. Ratdke would like to see a little more detail. Mr. Beasley said that on the State side, we are budgeting to what the State will allow us.

Ms. Hodges asked if the Board will see the information before March 24. Ms. Cornelius said the County budget will be available on line, and if we are going to have a direct question, we can communicate it to DSS.

IX. HANOVER DSS DASHBOARD

Ms. Ferguson introduced herself. She has been the Quality Assurance Coordinator since 2001, and provides the monthly Dashboard for the County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, and the Board.

The first chart shows the number of SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid applications. If one person applied for all three programs, it would count as three. Information received from the State is behind, and December data just came out today. The ongoing benefit program count (cases) is now over 8,900, and 9,000 is projected for January. Mr. Johnson asked why there was such an increase. Ms. Ferguson responded that in looking at comparative peer counties, Hanover is actually lower. Counts tend to be somewhat of a seasonal thing. The new to benefit programs number counts how many people are new to DSS programs and have never received benefits anywhere. This number is for applications so is counted as cases. Requirements are the same for all counties.

Ms. Ferguson explained each graph. Ms. Sening asked if there was any estimate on unserved groups with Medicaid Expansion. We do not have a clear estimate at this time, but have passed the number predicted. Dr. Crossen-Powell commented that we are one of the few localities who has surpassed the prediction. The State uses census data, and looks at the poverty line. Mr. Taylor said that DMAS predicted there would be 400,000 people eligible, and, right now, the count is at 380,000.

Ms. Ferguson discussed the Performance Indicators Monthly Report (PIMR) which is the data for Benefit Programs. There are various contributing factors to a few of the lower measures in

some categories, but, for December, the measurements were all at 98%. We have no control over on-line Medicaid applications because they come in late.

The next category is the Critical Outcomes Report which is for the Permanency and Protection cases in CPS and Foster Care. Children going into detention are being included in this count, and we are trying to find out if these are true numbers. Dr. Crossen-Powell said there are four foster care youth in a juvenile facility. One will go to adult prison, one to long-term placement in a juvenile facility, and we are not certain about the other two. We did not make these placements and feel we should not held accountable for them. However, the placements are included in our measurements.

There have been four adoptions, two emancipations, two custody transfers, and two reunifications. Emancipation is not considered as permanency by the State.

For the CPS category, we have been on track for almost two years in the category of cases in queue for supervisory approval. We pull from about 15 systems for this report's data, and some information is tracked manually. The Family Assessments Bill will allow for assessments to be completed with 60 days instead of 45.

X. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The VIEW worker met with a representative from Habitat for Humanity. Some VIEW clients are paying more in rent than they would for a mortgage. One client has been approved and one is waiting. This looks to be very successful for DSS clients.

A staff meeting was held, and VA Kids Belong, along with some local churches, provided doughnuts for all staff members. Rhu will be working with that organization more to start recruiting for foster parents (we will do the training). Ms. Janet Kelley is in charge of the program. Homes are needed for older children, and Ms. Kelley is working with us.

The APS Supervisor, Ms. Sonya Smith, has taken the lead to implement the Governor's pilot on suicide prevention for veterans/active military/military families. She is a veteran herself. A large number of staff will be working with her. We also talked to CSB and will be in touch with them if someone declares to be suicidal. CSB will then immediately send someone. This expands the reach of this department, and whenever we are aware of this type of situation, the person will be taken to CSB. Mr. Johnson asked if DSS was working with the American Legion or other organizations. A meeting with the VFW will be scheduled. Mr. Johnson asked if any brochures were available. There are not at this time, but will be coming soon. February 1, 2020 is the pilot start date. There are 7,000 veterans in Hanover. Mr. Johnson suggested Mr. Dan Smith, Deputy Director of Hanover Parks & Rec as a contact.

A CPS complaint was received from the National Suicide Hotline about a person who claimed they were 13 years old and going to kill themselves because their parents were abusive. The person had no contact information. We worked with Ashland Police Department and could not identify where the call was originating as the signal showed it was in five different countries. It could have been a hoax. Whenever DSS hears that someone is at risk, action is taken.

We have asked the State for additional money in certain program lines, Independent Living and another. There is less than \$80,000 for several of them.

A candidate's name for the vacant CPS position was submitted to HR Friday.

An interesting point about the fuel vs. cooling program is that we do not know how much money if going to be allotted until the program ends. The State divides all the funding.

The State signed a pledge for the SNAP-ET program on October 10, 2019 but did not advise us. We are supposed to start the program February 1, 2020.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Radtke moved to adjourn the SSAB meeting. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m. by Ms. Cornelius.



Bernadette A. Cornelius, Chair

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 26, 2020; 3:30 P.M.

March 24, 2020 SSAB meeting was canceled due to COVID-19