

October 22 2013 – Human Services Board Meeting

The Human Services Board met on October 22, 2013. Present were Phillip Carson, Vice-Chair White, Commissioner Dixon, Commissioner Moon and Commissioner Monteith. Also present were: Kevin King, Elise Bryson and Sheila Sutton.

Chairman Carson called the meeting to order and led the pledge.

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to adjust the agenda if needed. Commissioner Monteith seconded the motion. A vote was unanimous.

Items for Discussion:

Human Services Report: Sheila Sutton, DSS Director, gave the following report:

ELIGIBILITY PROGRAMS JULY 1, 2012 TO MAY 31, 2013

Medicaid

Medicaid and Health Choice have stayed steady in Swain County with 3105 active cases. We received 1245 new applications for report period. Medicaid Transportation served 3342 clients for report period.

Food and Nutrition Services FNS

782 New applications taken from July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013
1550 Total cases

TANF (Work First)

Low income, working families continue to benefit from our short term crisis assistance that we offer through the TANF program: Work First On-going, Work First Benefit Diversion, TANF Emergency Assistance.

217 Total number of families served from July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013

*Less families were assisted out of the TANF program due to the increase in funds received in LIEAP this year.

Energy Assistance Programs

Crisis Intervention Program (CIP)

Allocated \$106,094.00
210 Families served

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

Allocated \$42,600.00
181 Families served

SERVICE PROGRAMS JULY 1, 2013 TO MAY 31, 2013

Program Integrity

297 Total Open referrals:
\$68,639.00 Total claims for July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013
\$7,240.00 Total collections: Tax Intercept; Benefit garnishment
\$37,399.00 Total claims awaiting disposition in court.
\$24,000.00 Total pending claims

Child Support

448 Active cases from July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013.
\$739,292.00 Total collections for report period.

Child Protective Services

594 reports were accepted for investigation/assessment July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013.

*The number of cases being accepted for Investigation/Assessment has decreased in the past year due to mandatory training of staff in the report screening process. Two positive outcomes from this are that DSS is not getting involved with families without proper cause and secondly, a social worker's average caseload has stayed within the state recommended average of (12) for the past year.

In-Home Services

81 Families were placed into In-Home Services from July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013.

8 Average number of families placed into In-Home Services monthly.

46 Average number of families in In-home services per month.

Foster Care

37 Children were in DSS custody from July 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013

37 Children were reunited with their family in during report period

37 Children in custody as of May 31, 2013.

1 Adoption

Adult Protective Services

87 Reports were taken for report period; of those, 37 were accepted for assessment.

37 Outreach visits (Home visits conducted if APS report does not meet the criteria of Abuse, neglect, or exploitation)

16 Guardianships (Case management for Wards of the state)

22 Representative Payee Accounts (Case management of finances for clients/wards)

3 Special Assistance (Cash assistance payments for clients living in their own Home or living in an Assisted Living Facility.

3 Investigations on Licensed Adult group homes that have received a complaint.

PROGRAM UPDATES AND POLICY CHANGES

Service Delivery is Evolving with a "No Wrong Door" Policy

NC FAST Update

NC FAST is now fully functional for Food and Nutrition Services. It has been a rough road for the FNS Unit as they have learned the new system. Applications that used to take thirty minutes to an hour were taking up to two hours to complete. Customer service was affected and the staff was not able to be as available as they had been in the past which was difficult for all involved. It has been almost six months now and we are beginning to see "the light at the end of the tunnel". Now that the almost 1,500 FNS case are entered into the NC FAST system, the workers are seeing a more efficient way of doing things. When Medicaid goes live in the coming year, it will be a very client friendly, single port of entry process which will streamline the programs as our client base continues to grow.

Swain County Welfare Fraud Hotline

In April our Agency established a Welfare Fraud Hotline to enable people to report suspected fraud 24/7. The volume of calls is very low, however we are anticipating that they will pick up with additional public announcements.

The number is 488-7856 or 1-800-662-7030

Or email to: welfarefraudreporting@swaindss.org

The Affordable Care Act (ACA)

The ACA will impact DSS starting October 2013. North Carolina leadership chose to utilize a Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM) in lieu of creating a state-run exchange. As a result, Swain DSS will see an increase in the number of people coming through the doors. This is being referred to as the *woodwork effect* and it refers to the group of people who are

currently eligible for Medicaid, but are not currently receiving coverage. Given the individual mandates included in the ACA, which require most individuals to obtain health insurance or face fines, it is expected that many of these individuals “will come out of the woodwork” to apply for coverage. In addition to the currently eligible but not receiving “woodwork” population, there is also a population of customers who would potentially be eligible if North Carolina had expanded Medicaid coverage to individuals up to 133% with a 5% disregard of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL).

“No Wrong door policy” means people will be able to apply anywhere for all insurance affordability programs; in-person, online, by mail, or by phone.

Starting October 2013 a *Web-Based Marketplace* will be utilized for people to compare benefits and shop for health insurance. The FFM will screen clients for Medicaid and allow individuals between 100 to 400% of the Family Poverty Level (FPL) to apply for tax credits on insurance premiums.

The clients who are potentially eligible for Medicaid will be directed to DSS agencies via the NC FAST system. As stated above, this is going to increase the number of walk-ins at DSS agencies. During this period clients will be using a more simplified application for all affordability programs such as Medicaid, NC Health Choice; Insurance; and Advance Payment of Tax Credits for those who qualify for federal subsidies.

Starting January 2014:

The Modified Adjusted Gross Income will come into effect (MAGI), which will standardize the calculation of income in determining Medicaid eligibility. There will possibly be changes regarding countable and non-countable income and how it is counted. For example, child support would no longer be countable.

This new process will be called *Real-Time eligibility*, which creates a seamless experience for the customer and the eligibility worker will rely primarily on electronic data for verification.

*For questions: go to the NC FAST Website: www.ncdhhs.gov/ncfast

Informal Discussion: The Human Services Board will meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month immediately following the Swain County Board of Commissioners work session at 5:30 p.m. The Department of Social Services and Health Department will alternate and report every other month. The Human Services Advisory Board will meet quarterly. A retreat will be scheduled for Human Services Board and Advisory Board in January.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss at this time, David Monteith made a motion to adjourn. Donnie Dixon seconded the motion. A vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindi C. Woodard,
Clerk to the Board
Swain County Commissioners

Phil Carson,
Chairman
Swain County Commissioners