

NORTHEAST DELTA HUMAN SERVICES AUTHORITY (NEDHSA)

Board Meeting MINUTES

February 9, 2021

Remote meeting held via ZOOM format

5:30PM

Call to Order Meeting called to order by Michael Shipp and prayer was led by Dr. E. H. Baker and a quorum was met.

Adopt Agenda: A Motion was made by Dr. E. H. Baker seconded by Thelma Merrells to approve /accept the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Adopt Minutes of January 12: A Motion was made by Latanya Whiteside and seconded by Thelma Merrells to approve / accept the Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Members Present:

Mike Shipp, Latanya Whiteside, Dr. E. H. Baker and Thelma Merrells

Board Absent: Rev. Shawn Hornsby and Yvonne Lewis

Northeast Delta HSA staff present: Dr. Monteic Sizer, Delores Harris and Dr. Jeanie McGee

Ownership Linkage-Recognition of Guests: None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – No requests for comment.

BOARD EDUCATION/ ENDS Items for DISCUSSION

Upcoming Events/Community Action

We are currently undergoing a legislative audit. And you may recall many months ago, I mentioned that Northeast Delta, like many other state and federal agencies, deferred/temporarily suspended sending vulnerable communities to collections due to their inability to pay for clinical services due to COVID-19 related concerns.

To ask vulnerable, marginalized communities to pay fees when they don't have the financial ability to do so, would have created further stress and force many to abandon life-saving clinical services. As a state safety-net provider of behavioral services to vulnerable communities, we have a clinical, state, and moral obligation to do no harm to the patients we serve.

As a treatment and clinical matter, our patients are some of the most fragile mentally, physically, and economically. Additionally, due to COVID-19 and related societal stressors, their symptoms have been exacerbated. And without needed clinical services and medications, our patients would be at extreme risk for increased hospitalization, incarceration, and death. The rates of mental illness and addiction have increased overall in our region, state, and nation due to COVID-19. I mentioned this during our last Board meeting.

Lastly, we were sending patients billing statements prior to COVID-19. We also intend to resume sending billing statements when appropriate for services rendered. Again, we did not make an arbitrary decision to stop sending billing statements. We were intentional about this. We stopped

sending billing statements temporarily to avoid patient cancellations, institutionalizations, and unnecessary deaths.

We will begin an underage drinking surveillance program in partnership with LDH-OBH in our region. The purpose is to curb alcohol being sold to minors and reward those who are being responsible and not selling alcohol to minors. Alcohol consumption in underage communities are on the rise and this is one additional preventive measure we are employing to mitigate this growing issue. Ouachita is the targeted parish.

Agency prevention Mardi grass activities will occur the weekend of February 13-14, 2021 Northeast Delta is partnering with West Monroe leaders.

Dr. Monteic A. Sizer continues to be asked to join statewide panels as a subject matter expert relative to the state's Covid-19 response. The most recent panel focused on the disproportionate deaths happening in the African American community. Mistrust was discussed as well within this population relative to Covid-19 vaccination. Upcoming panels will include a faith response and a larger set of other community solutions.

Northeast Delta departments continue to develop plans for a phased, full reopening model where clients are seen face-to-face. All plans include universal precaution measures, technology, PPE gear, etc. Planning is being done following the Governor's recent phase 3 announcement. We have already secured many of the items needed to ensure the safety of staff and clients.

We continue to participate in many social media campaigns, including suicide prevention and various addiction ones. We have also started a massive digital public awareness campaign about our programs and various services. This digital campaign includes Google, website, news banners, various social media outlets, etc. One commercial features our agency, and the other discusses opioids and what we are doing about it.

We are getting closer to outsourcing our pharmacy services as a cost saver with GEONOA Pharmacy. Again, we would maintain our current infrastructure. GEONOA would give us maximum flexibility and improve our services to regional clients.

We are partnering with LSU Ochsner Conway to administer Northeast Delta staff the Covid-19 Pfizer vaccine. Additionally, we are planning to have our soon to be pharmacy offer the Covid-19 vaccine to Northeast Delta staff who prefer the Moderna vaccine. We will be offering the vaccine to our outpatient and inpatient clients. We will do the same for contractors as well.

The mobile unit will be in operation very soon to help assist people with Mental Health screening and other things such as blood pressure checks and this will help alleviate the burden on people who don't have transportation to be able to receive health checkups in the rural areas.

The Prevention and Wellness Department has created a Rapid Response Program which consist of a grief counselor and nurse. The nurse is able to draw blood to test for Hep C and HIV. The collaboration is with 1st responders to assist when there is a crisis situation happening in the nine

parishes that we service. Narcan is also being offered to those individuals that may have a loved one that is addicted so it is readily available so they can assist with saving a loved one's life who may have a potential overdose. It has been a very successful collaboration.

Office of Developmental Disability Services is partnering with NEDHSA Communications Department to do a webinar to showcase the potential of individuals with Developmental disabilities of being capable and ready to work and engage in society.

GOVERNANCE PROCESS/EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS for DECISIONS

Executive Director – Monthly Activity and Fiscal Reports

After the ED's report was presented and the monthly Fiscal data Reports a Motion was made by Latanya Whiteside seconded by Dr. E. H. Baker to approve / accept reports as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Planning & Budgeting/Financial Condition and Activities – With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition and activities, the ED shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities established in Ends policies.

NEDHSA's FY20-21 appropriated budget is \$15,169,624. Our SGF = \$7,730,554. Our IAT = \$6,665,226. Self-generated = \$773,844.

Board –

- Public Official Ethics Training - due by May 15 (page 32)
- Personal financial disclosure – due by May 15 (page 32)

BOARD MANAGEMENT – Ongoing

- Board Development/ Parish Outreach
- Mr. Shipp suggested reaching out to a member of the Senate and House of Representative to ask them to meet via ZOOM and give our board members a chance to ask about proposed legislation affecting our agency or the clients that we serve. The board members were asked to make a list of questions that they can ask during the meeting. Mr. Michael Shipp will get in contact with a representative from both houses to speak at the April 13, 2021 board meeting.
- Board Members Terms/Renewal of Appointments
- Travel Forms due MONTHLY

ADJOURN a Motion made by Latanya Whiteside and seconded by Thelma Merrells to close the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting – March 9, 2021 - 5:30 pm

Remote meeting to be held via ZOOM format