

Scotland County of Social Services Board
January 19, 2023
Regular Meeting

The vision of the Scotland County Social Services Board is to foster individual responsibility and to create a strong cooperative community that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

DSS Board Members Present: Dorothy Tyson Vice Chair, BJ Gibson, Mollie Flowers, Andy Kurtzman.

DSS Board Members Absent: Leon Butler Board Chair

DSS Employees Present: April Snead, Director, Jessica Buehler, Administrative Assistant/Clerk to the Board, Joy Hine, Income Maintenance Program Administrator, Shannon Hammonds Social Work Program Administrator, Wendy Stanton, Social Work Program Administrator, Twanna McCrimmon, Quality Assurance/Program Integrity Supervisor, Joslyn Wright, Quality Assurance Social Worker, Nora Nicholson, Social Worker III, Jayda Purvis, Social Worker III

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Dorothy Tyson. BJ Gibson led the opening prayer.

A motion to approve the agenda for the January 19, 2023 meeting was made by BJ Gibson and seconded by Mollie Flowers. The Board unanimously approved and the agenda accepted.

A motion to approve the December 15, 2022 meeting minutes was made by Andy Kurtzman and seconded by BJ Gibson. The Board unanimously agreed and the minutes were approved.

Public Forum

Joslyn Wright, Nora Nicholson, and Jayda Purvis, are social workers in the Children Services Unit of the Department. A concern was expressed to the Board about the current county mileage reimbursement rate of 40 cents per mile. The current federal rate is 65 cents per mile. There is also a concern of the wear and tear on social workers' personal vehicles due to the traveling component of the job. Social workers travel quite frequently, as they are required to visit with their assigned children, at least monthly. Many children are out-of-county, often across the State. Ms. Wright stated this becomes more of an issue with social workers that reside outside of Scotland County. For example, Ms. Wright places, at minimum, fifty miles on her vehicle each day. Social workers also showed concern for the wear and tear of the vehicles and the liability insurance being an out-of-pocket expense.

The workers were asked to keep receipts of maintenance work for their vehicles. This was in an attempt to have the maintenance written off during the tax process. The Board is unsure if this will be an acceptable item, but encourages social workers to do so, as there is a possibility that the maintenance can be written off.

The Board inquired about the possibility of requesting a Department vehicle and were informed that the Department currently has two vehicles, which are shared between child protective and adult protective social workers. Director Snead informed the Board that over twenty social workers share the two cars. Ms. Purvis stated that when the Department has a full time Community Social Services Assistant, there is only one vehicle to request. Mr. Gibson asked why cars are not being replaced. Director Snead informed Mr. Gibson that one to two vehicles are in the Department's budget each year. However, it is an item that is cut from the budget each year.

Mr. Gibson informed the Board that he will bring the concern of the county mileage rate to the County Manager, Kevin Patterson, He will also discuss this with other County Commissioners as well. It was asked if the Board and Director Snead supported moving forward with presenting the concern to the Commissioners. Director Snead supported moving forward and stated that it has been 13 years since the County has seen an increase in the mileage rate. The Board unanimously agreed that it would like to present this concern to the County Commissioners at the next meeting in February. Director Snead stated that she will discuss this with Jason Robinson, Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners and have this added to the February agenda. The Board asked for the social workers to join Director Snead while presenting at the meeting. Mrs. Tyson thanked Joslyn, Nora, and Jayda for their time.

Director Snead gave the Administrative Report

Please see the attached report

Discussion from the report:

Budget and Finance:

Medicaid Reimbursement for staff time remains at 75%, however, new state interpretation of claimable costs have reduced other reimbursements to only 50%. These include supplies, contracts, and leases. The Department is losing between \$13,000 and \$14,000 each month in Medicaid reimbursement as compared to previous years. The Department will continue to monitor this.

A Local Business Liaison monitoring is underway for the Department's finances. Two months of the needed items were sent to the Division. Results may be back before the next Board meeting. If the Department is losing money or incorrectly coding, the Division will inform the Department.

Focusing on the Maintenance of Effort was placed on the FY 23 Strategic Agenda. Maintenance of Effort is legislation that requires the county to spend \$698,000 in order to be reimbursed \$511,000. The spending has to be made on specific items such as computer costs and administrative time through daysheet coding. The Department is in a better place this year and on target to meet the goal of the strategic plan.

Last Friday was the first run of the munis system and semi-monthly payment. Three employees were not paid. Director Snead alerted the county finance offices and the employees were provided a paper check the same day. Other employees experienced issues as well, such as deductions and their yearly pay increase of 1.25% not going into their check. The County is also operating on a new Executime system, which is encountering leave balance issues. Staff are currently unaware of their actual leave balance as the balances shown in Executime do not match the leave balances that are shown in Munis. The County is working diligently to fix these errors.

Child Care:

After meeting with a representative yesterday, Director Snead was once again informed that the Department is overspending. However, she was informed by the representative to not become concerned as the State will cover costs and to continue operating as we are.

Food and Nutrition:

Some Food and Nutrition staff are helping with the LIEAP application. As of now, there are between 65 and 70 LIEAP applications received each day. This does not include applications taken through ePASS or by telephone.

February will be the last month that Food and Nutrition clients will receive the supplemental benefits granted during COVID-19. Clients will see between \$5.00 and \$8.00 less, per day, in their current benefits. Mrs. Tyson suggested ways to get this information out to the public. Director Snead will be discussing this, as well as energy programs, during Live on Main, with WLNC Radio.

Adult and Family Medicaid:

The Department has rebutted one error that was found during the audit. This was a \$1,200 claim. The Department awaits a response from the State.

Children Services:

The Vacant positions are in various stages of being fulfilled. More staff are getting released from training, which will help relieve the workload for other staff.

Mrs. Tyson asked Director Snead to discuss the repeat maltreatment percentage in the administrative report. Director Snead informed the Board that repeat maltreatment, as related to foster care, meant that once the child was returned home, a new allegation would arise and the child was returned to foster care. In regards to cases that were not placed in foster care, such as in home services, when the case was closed, another case was opened on the same family. This specific goal discussed cases that were substantiated, but were not placed into foster care.

SCATS:

Ridership is increasing. SCATS averages between 120 to 140 calls per day. There are two office staff. If one staff member is not in attendance, SCATS has to pull another DSS employee to help. Two part-time drivers have been hired. One has been released from training.

New DSS Initiatives:

It was discussed that since the Leadership Development Program has been established, this is the first year that participants have withdrawn, both for personal reasons. The class began with 8 and now has 6 participants. Director Snead informs the Board that in the first year the class was held, 50% of graduates were promoted within the agency.

Mrs. Tyson inquired about annual surveys. The Board has surveyed the Department employees. Mrs. Tyson has asked that this item be added to a future agenda so that a decision can be made on the survey.

Director Snead discussed why the DSS Board meeting was not rescheduled. The current rules of procedure state advanced notice must be given before a meeting can be rescheduled. To change the meeting, the public would not have been given ample notice of the schedule change. It was decided that Mrs. Tyson would run the meeting as this is a duty granted to Mrs. Tyson as Vice Chair. The Board agreed that seven days is ample notice and will begin to practice this.

A motion to adjourn was made by BJ Gibson and seconded by Andy Kurtzman. The motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Jessica Buehler, Clerk to the Board

Dorothy Tyson, Board Vice Chair

Administrative Report

January 2023

Budget and Finance

- The FY 23 DSS budget amount is \$8,544,084. The FY 23 SCATS budget amount is \$619,512 requiring an approximate 20% match in county funding. The Reentry budget is in mid-year, as the budget runs from September 10th to September 11th each year. Spending through November is:
 - DSS 42%
 - Reentry 9%
 - SCATS 32%
- DHHS new interpretation of DHB approved administrative funding has decreased Medicaid administrative reimbursement. A three month reimbursement report shows a decrease of \$40,160 with a projected average annual decrease of \$160,642.
- Increase the percent of MOE spending to maximize federal funding. Daysheet coding for Children Services, Daycare, Work First has been changed to begin the fiscal year. In FY 22, the agency collected \$374,603 (41%) of available MOE funds. Through November, \$456,739 of the \$698,115 county portion had been spent and \$215,487 (36%) of federal funds collected. **(Strategic Plan)**
- Cross train in the DSS reimbursement process. Part I training is ongoing. Part II of the 1571 report training with the Finance Technician including the new process for Medicaid reimbursement is complete. **(Strategic Plan)**

Personnel Services

- The Department has seven vacancies, one SWS III, one SW IAT, one SWIAT (On Call), one IMC 1 (retirement), one IM INV II, one IM IMV I (frozen), and one CSSA. The turnover rate for FY 23 is 11% (two retirements, two dismissals) through the month of November compared to FY 22 agency wide turnover rate of 20%.
 - July - December 2022 Turnover
 - Resignations - 9 (1 Economic, 6 CSU, 1 SCATS, 1 Adult Services) None left for other county DSS work
 - Retirements -2 (1 Economic Services, 1 Support Services)
 - Dismissals - 3 (1 CSU, 1 Support Services, 1 SCATS)
- Additional duties have been placed on personnel from county finance/personnel. If an additional position is needed to complete increased duties is under consideration.
- To continue improvement of the hiring process, reference forms were re-evaluated and now in use. **(Strategic Plan)**

Child Support

- Child Support is meeting goals in all areas of self-assessment.
- The unit strives to collect \$100,000 on Show Cause Court Dates. As of December, the unit has collected a total of \$73,661, putting them on target to exceed their goal. **(Strategic Plan)**

- The unit will Show Cause 90% of all new orders when no payment is made in the first 90 days of court order origination. As of the end of December, the unit has only had 12 cases that did not have a payment in the first 90 days. Seven have had a show cause filed on them. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The year started with 808 arrears cases without an arrears frequency. As of the end of December, the unit has reduced the number of cases by 142 with a goal of reducing by 50%. **(Strategic Plan)**

Economic Services:

Child Care

- The Daycare unit currently serves 616 children. This number fluctuates each month based on the attendance reported by the daycare centers. The waiting list has been depleted at this time. These children are attending 18 daycares in Scotland County and 32 daycares outside Scotland County.
- The Daycare unit is meeting MOU goals consistently for timeliness.

Food and Nutrition

- The FNS unit is meeting MOU goals consistently.
- USDA approved a waiver to stop most FNS reviews through March 2023. Staff are continuing to scan files, to complete the paperless process, and to key LIEAP applications.
- February 2023 will be the final month for FNS emergency allotments in addition to regular eligible benefits, impacting recipient benefits. Notices will be sent by DHHS to households that have active cases. Our FNS department will be able to provide them with additional food resources that may help, such as WIC and food bank referrals. Once a press release is provided by DHHS, this will be distributed.
- The unit strives for a same day processing goal of 40% for expedited applications and a twelve day average for non expedited applications. During the month of December expedited applications were at 36% and non-expedite were at an average of 12 days. **(Strategic Plan)**

Family and Adult Medicaid

- The Medicaid file review of the Single County Audit occurred on August 9th and completed on October 26th. Information from DHB is being reviewed to determine potential Medicaid reimbursement.
- Both Medicaid units are working two months ahead of recertification due dates.
- Both Medicaid units continue to exceed timeliness requirements of the MOU.
- Medicaid Transportation to implement a paperless filing system. Building the metadata is in process through MCCI. **(Strategic Plan)**

- Scotland County has been chosen to participate in the expansion of Recertification Straight-Through Processing (STP). Go-live for recertification STP was live January 1, 2023.

Work First

- The Work First unit is meeting MOU goals consistently
- Beginning January 1, 2023 WFFA began receiving EPASS applications as well as in person, fax, mail or over the phone.

Program Integrity

- The Program Integrity position has been reposted.
- 100% of cases are being investigated timely.

Quality Assurance/Training

- During the month of December, QA reviewed 151 files for accuracy.
- The unit is working towards all four staff being cross-trained in each program.

Social Work Services:

Adult Services

- Increase MAC reimbursement by 5%. In November 61% of social work time was coded to MAC. **(Strategic Plan)**

Children Services

- Children services currently has three vacancies, one Social Worker Supervisor and SW IAT and SW IAT (on call)
- Initiate 95% of all screens in CPS reports within required time frames. For December, 2022, 98% of reports were initiated within time frames. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- For all children who were victims of maltreatment during a 12 month period, no more than 9.1% receive a subsequent finding of maltreatment. As of December, 2022 repeat maltreatment is 19%. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- Of children entering foster care in a 12 month period, 40.5% are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care. As of December, 2022 the rate of permanency within 12 months is 51%. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- Of children entering foster care in a 12 month period and discharged to permanency within 12 months through reunification, kinship care, or guardianship, no more than 8.3% re-enter foster care within 12 months of discharge. As of December, 2022, 0% of children re-entered foster care within 12 months. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**

- Of children entering foster care in a 12 month period, the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care does not exceed 4.1%. As of December, 2022 the rate of foster care moves was 2%. **(Strategic Plan, MOU measure)**
- The Social Work QA process focuses on Child Welfare and will expand to Adult Services as well. The QA social worker was promoted and a new QA social worker is in place. **(Strategic Plan)**
- All social work documentation will be current within seven days. This continues to be an area of focus. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The agency implemented our 1st Annual Virtual Angel Tree that allowed community partners to provide our foster children with gifts during the holiday season. Every child in foster care was selected and gifts were dropped off at the agency and delivered to each child.

Work First Employment

- The agency has one Work First Employment social worker with a caseload of Work First participants required to have a Mutual Responsibility Agreement.

DPS Reentry Program

- The Program received a one time allocation of \$36,000 required to be spent by December 12th. This funding was used for salary, benefits, and participant costs.
- The 2023 Reentry Conference will be held April 3rd - April 5th in Charlotte, NC.

Scotland Area Transit System (SCATS)

- SCATS ridership has decreased from November to December by 7%. Historically, ridership has decreased during this same time each year, by as much as 16%, due to the holidays. Overall ridership is up almost 7.35% from the same period of FY22 and by 47.9% from FY21. **(Strategic Plan)**
- The 5311 Capital and Administrative grants have been submitted. A public hearing was held on 1/9/23 at the Commissioner's meeting.
- On December 19th, the agency transitioned to a hybrid model for transportation offered to the general public. One fixed line continues to operate, while adding a demand response route for all riders in the county. The trips scheduled as demand response are increasing, as more public are made aware.
- Analyze and determine the cost per each SCATS trip. At this time the cost per trip has been analyzed as such:
 - Cost per passenger trip - \$17.40
 - Cost per hour - \$32.55
 - Cost per mile - \$2.54

More work will continue to monitor this and use a second tool to verify cost per trip. **(Strategic Plan)**

- SCATS has hired two part time drivers. Consideration is being made to hiring without a CDL. Qualifying conditions are being reviewed by Ed Johnson, county attorney and Kevin Patterson, county manager.

Other Impacts on DSS:

- LIEAP began on 12/1/22 for a limited population. On 1/1/23 the application process was opened to all citizens who meet the eligibility. All recipients of LIEAP in 2021 will automatically receive LIEAP this year, unless reporting a change.

New DSS Initiatives

- The Department offered the first quarterly Self Care Lunch and Learn sessions facilitated by the county Employee Assistance Program on 9/14/22 and 11/30/22. These sessions focus on self care, stress management, etc. Another is scheduled in the new year.
 - The FY 23 Leadership Development class has begun and met twice. Participants are working on team projects and beginning to present a leadership team topic to the group.
 - The agency created a Values Committee to define the values for DSS. The values have been defined as Respect, Teamwork, Dependability, Accountability, Innovation and Excellence. Values are now in job postings and job descriptions. Values are displayed throughout the agencies, including in job recruitment postings, included in job descriptions. Administrators are working to engrain values into job evaluations.
- (Strategic Plan)**
- The Department is working with COECO to upgrade the current copying/scanning to a cloud version with new, more efficient features. IT functionality has been approved and we are awaiting delivery of new copiers.

Common Acronyms

ADA - American with Disabilities Act

APS - Adult Protective Services

CPS - Child Protective Services

COVID - 19 - Coronavirus

DCDEE - Department of Child Development and Early Education (Daycare)

DHB - Department of Health Benefits (Medicaid)

DHHS - Department of Health and Human Services

FNS - Food and Nutrition Services

IT - Information Technology

LIHEAP - Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program

LIHWAP - Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program

LBL - Local Business Liaison

MAC - Medicaid Administrative Claiming (funding source)

MOU - Memorandum of Understanding

OHSR - Office of Human State Resources

OST - Operational Support Team

REDA - Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit

SCATS - Scotland County Area Transit System

SSBG - Social Services Block Grant (funding source)

SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SWAP - Scotland Wellness Assistance Program

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

PSNAP - Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WFFA - Work First Family Assistance