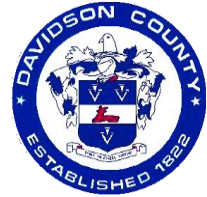


**DAVIDSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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**Davidson County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2021**

Board Members Present via Video Conference and in Person
Mrs. Karen Watford; Ms. Jane Murphy; Mr. Ed Dawson

Others Present

**Ms. Trish Baker; Mrs. Susan Bryan; Ms. Elizabeth Huff; Ms. Katrina McMasters; Mr. Scott Craver;
Mrs. Lexa Eagle; Ms. Sheri Woodyard; Mr. Jason Hicks; Mr. Casey Smith; Mr. Brian Ingraham;
Ms. Rhonda Cox; Mr. Donald Reuss; Mr. Brian Shuping**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Mrs. Karen Watford. Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to excuse Mr. Todd Yates from today's meeting. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Review of the Agenda – Additions/Modifications

There were no additions or modifications to the Agenda.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to adopt the Agenda for the meeting. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from regular meeting held on May 25, 2021 were reviewed. Ms. Jane Murphy made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Ed Dawson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Ms. Sheri Woodyard provided the minutes of the Closed Session for the May 25, 2021 meeting to the Board for their review. Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to approve the Closed Session minutes. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Board Member Comments

Mrs. Karen Watford took this time to thank everyone for their continued hard work and loyalty to the Agency.

Presentation and Discussion – Vaya LME/MCO – Brian Ingrahm, CEO

Ms. Trish Baker introduced Mr. Brian Ingraham, President and Chief Executive Officer for Vaya Health. Mr. Ingraham spoke about the power point presentation to help DSS understand what can be expected with the merger of Vaya and Cardinal Innovations. Mr. Ingraham asked other members of the team to introduce themselves. Ms. Rhonda Cox, Executive Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer introduced herself. She shared some of her duties and her history of serving the mental health population for the past 25 years. Mr. Donald Reuss, Senior Vice President of Provider Network Operations, introduced himself and gave some of his history. He has been in the mental health system for 25 years. Over 17 years has been spent managing LME/MCO's in North Carolina. Mr. Brian Shuping, Senior Director of Community Relations introduced himself as well. He talked about his job duties and expressed his pleasure with working with Davidson County and its citizens. Mr. Ingraham spoke again about his experience in the mental health system in North Carolina for 21 years.

The Power Point presentation was shared by Mr. Ingraham. Each slide was discussed and elaborated upon. There was also discussion about Vaya being the surviving entity once the merger between Vaya and Cardinal Innovations is complete. There was discussion about the Letter of Intent that was a part of the Power Point presentation. Many of the counties now served by Vaya counties are very similar to the counties they would be accepting from the Cardinal/Vaya merger. He stated that Vaya feel their model works well for counties like Davidson. This is the 4th consolidation for Vaya. The two entities will immediately establish a steering committee to oversee the activities between the two Boards. Lanier Cansler, former Secretary of DHHS has been appointed as the facilitator for this committee.

The Consolidation Agreement was discussed along with the goal to finalize the agreement no later than July 31, 2021. Clear milestones and a timeline must be established to bring everyone on board under the Vaya brand. Cardinal is fully supportive of Vaya taking the wheel to get the services out there to recipients. Vaya will be trying to be respectful of the Cardinal staff of 900.

We are also in the middle of Medicaid Transformation. Management of Medicaid benefits may be a bumpy change for recipients as well as providers. Delays on the front end will cause delays on the back end. RFA's will be decided, hopefully by June 30, 2021. The tailored plan and consolidation are different and separate.

Vaya wants to settle things down for counties moving from one LME to another LME. Counties have an ability to make choices about where they would like to be. The work of consolidation is between Vaya and Cardinal and is the normal course of work. Disengagement from Cardinal/Vaya will be a lengthier process and must be decided by the State.

Vaya will stress communication between the counties, citizens, providers and the LME/MCO. This will be a challenge because of the large catchment area, but Mr. Ingraham feels it will be possible.

Mrs. Watford expressed concern about how Vaya will work with our vulnerable population as well as the DSS employees that may be involved in trying to secure services and placement for children and adults in the care of DSS.

Mr. Dawson expressed that the complex cases we have now are more complex than they were years ago. There has been an eruption of complex cases, especially for our kids. Mr. Ingraham started at DSS in 1978 in the CPS area. He had never heard of the combination, complexity and multiple issues then as he's seen for the kids of North Carolina now. He states there are lots of resources available. They try to meet the needs on the front end. Mr. Ingraham stated that Vaya is in it with us. The decision made may not be what everyone wants, but the goal will be to do what is best for the child involved.

There was discussion about how the different parts of the Vaya organization works with the community and how they would become a presence in Davidson County. Mr. Ingraham stated he is a phone call away. He depends on his staff for their leadership. Leadership individuals are on call 24/7. Their physicians are located in North Carolina. There are many avenues for counties to participate. Presently, Vaya has 3 or 4 DSS Directors or Health and Human Services Directors on their Board. That number may change once the consolidation is complete. Mr. Ingraham spoke about the collaboration of the different Boards associated with Vaya. There were questions about Vaya staff being embedded in DSS offices. Vaya is working together with DSS and DJJ to have staff available, either on site or by telephone. This would be an option to be determined by the individual DSS. A DSS Resource guide is part of the packet shared by Vaya today. Vaya has held individual meetings with each of their counties to remind them what is available and what works and hearing from them what they feel does not work. Vaya is not going to overpromise for services. Their motto is under promise and over deliver. Vaya has had a Fast Track Process for quite some time.

Ms. Rhonda Cox spoke to the embedded care management for each county. Vaya also has some providers that are embedded into DSS offices in the counties they now serve. Vaya is seeing lots of cases they have never seen before. They have been proactive since 2014 to accommodate the needs of children and adults holistically. Restoration/Permanence is the goal when possible for the child. They challenge themselves to think outside the box to get the care needed. They have a really aggressive strategy for working with DSS. There is weekend protocol in place. There was discussion of the Resource Guide. Davidson County would have a direct contact with someone on Brian Shuping's team. This is a 24/7 contact.

Vaya has had long standing relationships with DSS and they work with DJJ as well. Ms. Cox provided contacts that would be good to talk to about how they provide services in other counties. They make every attempt to be sure services are sustainable in working with DSS and DJJ. There are numerous individuals who would be willing to speak to the DSS Board about how services are provided by Vaya.

Vaya shares data to Boards on a monthly basis that is one page of data for each county in their catchment area.

Vaya has Child and Family Services and Support and they conduct Single Point Assessments (SPA) in DSS and DJJ offices in order to allow assessors to obtain collateral details from staff for coordination of treatment recommendations. This helps minimize the time that children are institutionalized. Statistics were provided for average days it takes to address situations. Buncombe County data was shared because of high volume and complex cases they deal with.

The goal is to ultimately stabilize a family so the child can remain in the home. There are children that cannot go home and they realize this is a problem.

Any Cardinal provider in good standing would be brought on board as a Vaya provider. And there are providers available across the state.

Vaya also works with the non-Medicaid members the chart provided in the Power Point shows how well Vaya works with them.

Mr. Donald Reuss shared information about the relationship with local law enforcement. In conjunction with law enforcement, they map out how to avert and intercept individuals to keep them out of the justice system. They also have jail-based treatment and post jail treatment. They have recently begun mobile crisis help which is being provided to patrol officers via rapid response by telephone and/or tablet.

Follow up after discharge (FUAD) matrix was shared.

Crisis Services is a rich and well thought out process of their services. They have made a huge investment. They offer Mobile Crisis services as well as walk in services.

Emergency respite beds are utilized and will be available to the residents of Davidson County.

DSS Partnerships: Innovating for success slide shared. Mr. Reuss spoke about the One Home Pilot. Initiatives have been rolled out and they were shared on the power point slide. Vaya has a brand-new model for therapeutic foster care homes. This new model, One Home Pilot, was created and put into place in Cherokee County. This is a model whereby a child never has to change placement even if the needs of the child change. Vaya increases the level of support wherever the child may be residing. They also provide an enhanced rate for the foster family. This creates better outcomes for children and foster families. Placement will become shorter when Families First comes into effect in October 2021. They want to create systems for providers to commit to serving local children.

They are continually working to get an individual out of institutional care, if that is what is needed. They have put a lot of effort into getting them back into the community.

Mr. Ingraham thanked the Board for their time. Mrs. Watford expressed her concern that consolidation is very scary for Davidson County. She likes the motto of under promise and over deliver. She also liked the fact that they stated they are adaptable.

What can we expect from Vaya with this next upheaval and transitional year with the anticipated changes.

Vaya has been at the mental health process for a long time. Mr. Ingraham encouraged the Board to speak with others to know what they are doing and the services they provide. He feels Cardinal saw the same similarities in their counties as Vaya serves. Vaya has people on the ground, being available, and being accountable. They would bring these same services and strategies to Davidson County. They want to preserve the relationships between the Cardinal staff as the Vaya transition and consolidation moves forward. Vaya is very committed to what they do.

Ms. Cox stated that DSS would decide how many days and how many care providers would be available. Ms. Baker stated she appreciates the drive to keep children out of residential treatment. However, there are ultimately those children who cannot remain in their homes and have varied and numerous problems. Vaya hopes to have the ability to wrap services within the residential placement and keep the child from bouncing around. Their providers commit to have beds available for Vaya kids. Vaya is trying to keep services available. Their staff sees kids no matter where they are.

Vaya predicts there will be changes that would most likely take place within the next month. There will be more and more changes as the transition and consolidation continues.

Vaya has indicated that they are at the high end of providing services and Cardinal is at the low end of providing services. Ms. Baker asked how they will balance this difference and bring this all together? Vaya has contracts with some of the same providers and will hold providers accountable and make them part of the solution to the problem.

Old Business

LME/MCO Discussion

Mr. Jason Hicks provided the information to the DSS Board that was shared with the BOCC about the possible disengagement from Cardinal. Ms. Baker asked if there were any thoughts or concerns about moving forward with the request. The BOCC will take this matter into consideration at the end of the month. There are concerns that Vaya may be spread too thin with the consolidation with Vaya. Vaya has a lot to do to make things better. If there are things that we like about Vaya, we could ask a new LME/MCO to work on getting those services in place. Mr. Casey Smith, Mrs. Karen Watford, Mr. Todd Yates and Ms. Trish Baker are going to Greensboro to visit with Sandhills Center.

There was discussion about whether to disengage and name Sandhills Center. Mr. Dawson feels it is wise to continue disengagement. The Board likes what they hear from Sandhills Center and they are contiguous with Davidson County.

The Board felt that we must see some immediate changes. Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to meet again on June 22, 2021 and begin at 3:00 pm. Ms. Jane Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting will need to be noticed as a second meeting for the month of June for the Davidson County DSS Board.

Date of Next Meeting

The next DSS Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 3:00 pm at the Governmental Center, fourth floor, Commissioners Meeting Room, Lexington, North Carolina.

Adjournment

Mr. Ed Dawson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jane Murphy. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm.

Minutes submitted by Patricia Baker