

**STUDY ON INTEGRATION OF
HAYWOOD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND HAYWOOD COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
FINAL REPORT
February 2013**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Task Force report provides an evaluation of the feasibility of combining the Haywood County Health Department and the Haywood County Department of Social Services into an integrated Human Services Agency. The study of the issue began with site visits to integrated Health and Human Services Agencies in North Carolina and included the following:

- Review of studies of Public Health from the UNC School of Government;
- Review of laws and policies related to other issues of integration, for example, the State Personnel Act and Governance;
- Facilitated discussion with interested parties; and
- Technical assistance from the UNC School of Government

After careful study, review and consultation, the Task Force concluded that Haywood County could benefit from integration in multiple ways, such as a focus on overall client needs and coordination of client services creating more efficiency and less duplicated effort.

With three options for governance included in the recently enacted NCHB 438, the Task Force considered the structure and makeup of Social Services and Health department's current boards, the benefit a variety of views would add, the time constraints of the Board of County Commissioners and the possible additional costs for training individuals regarding required board tasks. The Task Force concluded that presently both the Haywood County Social Services and the Haywood County Health Department have active boards and are well governed. Still, since the County could benefit from integration, and, after narrowing the choice to two preferred options, and researching the ramifications of each, the task force is recommending that Haywood County create a Consolidated Human Services Board that would maintain the powers and duties of the current health and social services boards.

Also, three crucial recommendations from the Task Force are (1) for development of a cross-training program for employees in order to sustain levels of service in the future, (2) revising the Haywood County Personnel Manual and policies to create a more substantially equivalent system capable of meeting all of the state and federal merit system requirements and (3) engaging the County's Indirect Cost Allocation Plan provider for suggestions on the most appropriate method of allocating or sharing expenses across the departments in order to maximize allowable reimbursement revenues.

Additionally, along with other recommendations included in this report, the Task Force recommends that any cost savings that may be realized in this integration should be placed back into the system in order that they may continue to increase efficiencies, improve meeting the benchmarks and serving the needs of the Agency, while lessening the long-term costs to the taxpayer. This concept has proven to be a crucial motivating factor in the Buncombe County plan and is suggested here as a way to facilitate a more successful integration.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS:

The Task Force recommends that integration should be seriously considered as there could be benefits for the County in the long run as outlined herein. Initial steps for integration, some of which may be beneficial even if integration does not occur, are as follows:

1. Further discussion and sharing of this report with the Boards of Health and Social Services for additional feedback.
2. The Task Force should remain intact through the process of integration. The legislation should be reviewed by the group and the Commissioners with the County Attorney and the consultants from the School of Government.
3. The HD and DSS should continue to follow the steps to joint efficiency already accomplished and listed herein.

4. Legal experts should also be consulted as to the NC Office of State Personnel (OSP) guidelines and policy guidance on HIPAA, confidentiality and other items as needed.
5. The Haywood County Personnel policies and manual should be overhauled to create a more substantially equivalent system capable of meeting all of the state and federal merit system requirements. There are several policies that need review and updating. Until such time, the County should opt to remain under the OSP for the CHSA. After such time, the County could place all employees under the new system to treat everyone equally, which is what the Task Force would recommend.
6. The Indirect Cost Allocation Plan Provider should be consulted to help create a financial plan for these costs and for shared employee expenses.
7. There should be consultation with the State DHHS Budget office and local business liaisons for the State. Other outside consultants may be needed as well.
8. A Human Services Support Team should be created including representatives from IT, Human Resources, and Finance.
9. A Desk Audit of all the positions in the management support areas should be performed to determine how to best to redeploy/reassign persons in these areas as necessary.
10. A plan for cross training of employees should be developed.
11. An Information Systems audit between the Departments should be done concerning what are the cost and efficiencies of expanding the Laser-fiche system, which both Departments presently have. A solution should be found so that documents and information could be shared to more easily assist clients.
12. A study should be done as to whether or not Q Flow or another client routing model should be implemented.

13. After all of the other items, and the full implementation of NCFAST, a mutual client list should be made along with a plan to better serve clients who need multiple services.
14. Any initial cost savings that may be realized should be placed back into the system in an effort to continually increase efficiencies, improve meeting of benchmarks, and serving needs of the County, all while lessening the long-term costs to the taxpayer. The Task Force recommends a resolution on this point.
15. Establish a Nominating Committee to recommend members to be appointed to the CHS Board in accordance with NCGS 153A-77(c). The initial CHS board shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners based upon the recommendations of a nominating committee comprised of members of the pre-consolidation board of health, social services board, and area mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services board.
16. Develop CHS Board or Advisory Committee Bylaws, policies and procedures addressing operations and role definitions among or between the different governing bodies.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

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