

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Draft Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm CT

Kneip Building, 1st Floor, DSS Conference Room

700 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501

Zoom: <https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/91523854488>

Meeting ID: 915 2385 4488

Board Members Present: Colleen Winters, Elton Blemaster, Howard Grinager, Karen Michels, Stacey Tieszen, and Sandy Diegel.

Board Members Absent: Cecelia Fire Thunder

Others Present: Matt Althoff, Department of Social Services (DSS) Cabinet Secretary; Brenda Tidball-Zeltinger, Deputy Secretary and Chief of Operations; Tiffany Wolfgang, Chief of Behavioral Health; Jennifer Humphrey, Strategic Initiatives Program Specialist; Alex Mayer, Chief of Children and Family Services; Vanessa Barnes, Assistant Director of Behavioral Health; and Tracy Mercer, Special Projects Coordinator. Members of the press: Bob Mercer, KELO; Arielle Zionts, KFF Health News; and Joshua Heir, SD Search Light.

Welcome: Matt Althoff provided a brief welcome to the group. Althoff also provided a short update on Medicaid Expansion. As of the date of the meeting, 11,000 to 12,000 South Dakotans had been approved through expansion. While an estimated 57,000 are potentially eligible, Althoff said that estimate was developed before Covid through an independent survey of the uninsured. This estimate includes contingency based on other state experiences and represents the potential total number that could enroll. How many will enroll is yet to be determined with more experience now that expansion has been implemented. DSS has been able to handle the influx of applications and is processing them well within the recommended guidelines.

Call to order: Colleen Winter called for roll and a declaration of a quorum was made. The meeting was officially called to order at 1:34 p.m.

Approval of the agenda: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Elton Blemaster and seconded by Stacy Tieszen. Motion carried.

Approval of May minutes: A motion to approve the April meeting minutes was made by Howard Grinager and seconded by Elton Blemaster. Motion carried.

Recognition of Service: Secretary Althoff recognized the service of Cecelia Fire Thunder. He explained that Fire Thunder was unable to attend the meeting, but he wanted to acknowledge the

expertise she provided the board during her service as she was terming out of her appointment at the end of October. Fire Thunder completed three consecutive terms, a total of 9 years of service on the board.

Behavioral Health Awareness Campaign: Tiffany Wolfgang spoke to the Behavioral Health Awareness Campaign that launched August 10, 2023. She asked the Board if they have seen evidence of the campaign. Tieszen comment that she has seen it everywhere in Sioux Falls. Winters, Diegel, and Blemaster all commented that they have seen the campaign in both commercials and billboards. Wolfgang let the Board know that there are billboards in or near the following communities: Sisseton, Colman, Gettysburg, Chamberlain, Lyman, Winner, Tyndall, Wagner, Hermosa, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City. They also utilize social media, radio, and print.

Wolfgang asked the board for ideas on how to reach more people with the campaign. Tieszen asked what they are looking for in metrics. Wolfgang responded that Lawrence and Schiller tracks clicks and hits on the microsite and quiz. Wolfgang commented that she is excited about some of the expanded surveying during different sections of the campaign. Winters asked who are the targeted populations of the campaign? It was explained that they have targeted messages for those in agriculture, veterans, and Native Americans. Althoff asked who else they should be targeting. Winter said she has concern for the farming population and is glad that demographic is targeted. The board wondered who they were partnering with for the campaign. Wolfgang stated that they have many partnerships. The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources has been a big one for the ag targeted audience. The best mechanisms they found for reaching those people are radio, newspaper, and extension offices. Jennifer Humphrey added that they work a lot with the Department of Tribal Relations and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Blemaster suggested the state office of the American Legion, in Watertown, and the Veteran's Center in Sioux Falls as it is an all-in-one facility. Humphrey encouraged the group to google SD Notes to Self campaign to view all the campaign's YouTube videos.

Stronger Families Together: Alex Mayer spoke to the Stronger Families Together initiative begun in May 2021. He explained the recruitment initiative focuses on communications through social media and other outlets to tell our story. Mayer talked about the wrap-around services that provide support to foster families. In addition to providing needed and essential assistance, these measures help ensure that foster families can and are willing to continue their tenure. Examples of support he shared were business discounts, events, and community backing. Brenda Tidball-Zeltinger added that recruiting and getting people interested in fostering is a big part of the process, but licensing and making it as accessible and streamlined as possible is key. Mayer added they are working with the Department of Tribal Relations to help message and target Native American families. Tieszen asked if they do a survey as to why families exit fostering. Mayer said yes, and the main reason is a change in family dynamics, but we stay in contact with former foster families. Winters asked about promoting respite care. If you aren't able to foster a child in your own home, offering to help with respite care might still be an option. Information about wrap care was requested. Mayer said that wrap care can be any sort of support or helping with a need from supply meals to offering grocery pickup. Winters asked how active are they? Mayer responded

that it depends on the community. Althoff said anecdotally foster families that have children previously don't reach out as much. He added the more we can humanize foster care it helps reduce the unknown. Michels explained that a family down the street fosters and they have offered their front porch as a safe place in case of an emergency for the foster child. It was agreed that is a great image of how someone can help. Althoff asked the Board members for ideas on how DSS might recruit more Native Americans families to foster. Howard said that one of the populations we don't want to ignore is the single foster parent and remember to provide them with extra resources. Tieszen suggested that the Department look into a mutual recruitment event held with CASA. Mayer said that they are always interested in events where they can speak and recruit.

Public Comment: Arielle Zionts with KFF Health News asked about potential foster families whose house may be in poor condition. Are there any grants to help? Mayer said the foster environment support the safety of the child. There are not any specific programs toward infrastructure there are community support in other aspects. Althoff said that money towards infrastructure typically runs up against the federal regulations, but faith-based organizations have been known to offer help.

Pregnancy Program: Brenda Tidball-Zeltinger gave the board an update about the change to Medicaid in effect since July regarding full coverage for pregnant women. Post Partum care was also extended to one-year after delivery. This helps connect to well child visits and supports mothers with ongoing care post delivery. The new 'home' program or "Pregnancy Program" concept is outside of basic medical care. Coordination of other care including supporting mothers to access prenatal vitamins, healthy food, and transportation to appointments. Partnering is occurring with Department of Health with their pregnancy programs to supplement services. Tidball-Zeltinger asked the board if they had thoughts about ways to reach the groups who do not seek any care? Tieszen asked the number who don't seek prenatal care and how many of those are due to substance abuse. Tidball-Zeltinger explained that if there is not a diagnosis at the time the person has been seen it makes it difficult to identify those persons, but based on a limited data set about 15%-18% appear to have received very limited or no prenatal care. Michels commented that when she was a nurse it was rare that a patient didn't have some kind of prenatal care. It is disturbing trend. Althoff said one of the things they are looking at is if geography or proximity to an obstetrics provider is a major factor. But also, Althoff noted the Department's investigation into whether SUD concurrent with pregnancy was also a reason mothers were not seeking prenatal care. It was asked percentage of the general population is on Medicaid. Tidball-Zeltinger said that of the 115,000 covered 68% are children. This statistic will change with expansion as more adults will be eligible to enroll. Althoff said other states have similar statistics. Winters said the Prams survey could have useful information along with birth record.

Public Comment: Arielle Zionts asked for clarification about the 15% without care is that absolutely no care? Tidball-Zeltinger said it would be very limited to none.

Plans of Safe Care: Mayer explained that plans of safe care help to assist moms with resources where there has been a history of substance abuse. This looks at prenatal care. It is meant to be a preventative aid to keep the mother clean. Althoff asked the board for suggestions for when the mom is scared that I have this habit, but if I go for help, I will get reported. Michels asked about half way houses. Althoff said that DSS supported 180 mothers last year through treatment facilities. Grinager wondered if testimonials from people that went through those programs placed in public places would help. Wolfgang said one thing that that they did was create a model that allows mother to bring their children to treatment.

Medicaid Expansion: Althoff said he was pleased to report that it has been a smooth launch as no technical glitches or major processing issues have occurred. On the tech side DSS knew that this would be a major consumption of IT programming/development resources. The EA team has not experienced any technical problems which caused us interruption to processing of applications. On the provider reimbursement side of Medicaid, hospital claims were delayed two and half months. We are very pleased with those providers for their patience. In terms of total enrolled, Althoff explained that the Medical Services website includes a Medicaid reporting dashboard that the Department created at the time Medicaid expansion began. We budgeted for 57,000 new participants and are steadily increasing enrollments every week toward that estimate. It was asked how hard was to accommodate the added FTE. Remember we are processing applications that are eligible and ineligible. The FTE help meet those timelines. Althoff said 66 of the 68 FTE positions have been hired.

Public Comment: Arielle Zions asked about finding information about expansion on the dashboard. Althoff explained that it shows the total number enrolled as of that month. Questions on the dashboard can be sent to Emily Richards.

Child Care Update: Althoff started the update by saying the Governor asked DSS to carry out her plan for responsible investment into child care using one-time federal monies. Through the expansion and startup grants child care providers could apply for equipment, but not infrastructure. Nearly \$15 million have been granted to 118 individual providers situated in 33 different communities. Other components to the Governor's investment plan are still in development/implementation, including the community-based grants for which GOED is currently taking applications.

Althoff explained that you do not have to be licensed to provide daycare in SD up to 12 children. Some that have less can voluntarily be regulated. It was asked if the some of the grants went to places like Boys and Girls clubs. Tidball-Zeltinger answered yes, a number of the grants were for after school programs.

Suicide Prevention and 988 Implementation: Vanessa Barnes gave an update on suicide prevention and the 988 implementations. A Lawrence and Schiller poll showed that 42% had heard of the 988 lifeline. A total of 6,755 calls, 653 texts, and 473 chats have occurred using 988 in the year ending in June. Grinager asked what the age of the callers are and how many are

coming from the farming community. Barnes answered the group 29 and younger reach out more. The 988 dashboard breaks down the demographics. Althoff said that the callers don't have to give personal information. If the caller agrees to a follow-up call, that gives the 988 counselor another opportunity to gather demographics. Althoff spoke about the 2023 Suicide Prevention Conference and its impact. It provided those who attend an understanding of the resources South Dakota has to offer. Blemaster said that any prevention is good. We have come a long way. He asked if there any problems going from 988 to a peace officer. Barnes said that they have several MOUs in place.

Future Agenda Items: Winters expressed gratitude to DSS staff for information on the all the programs. She learns something every time she attends. Althoff hopes the board will reach out if there are topics that they want more information on, or anything we can research.

Public Comment: No one appeared for public comment.

Next Meeting Date: April 16th was set as the next meeting.

Adjourn: Michels motioned to adjourn Tieszen seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.