

MECKLENBURG COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NEWSLETTER



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FEATURED ARTICLE

Family Justice Center Initiative



The mission of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Family Justice Center (FJC) is to support and aid victims of domestic violence (DV), sexual assault, child maltreatment, human trafficking and elder abuse to live free from violence and abuse and hold offenders accountable by providing easily accessible, coordinated, and comprehensive services in a single location.

A Phase I community-based program will provide crisis-focused resources, services, and support needed in the days immediately following victimization (or whenever a Phase I partner becomes aware) in a trauma informed environment with priority placed on coordination of the highest lethality cases.

The Phase 1 planning committee was formed to prepare for the Phase 1 Center project. The planning committee members are:

Jacqueline McKnight, DSS, Adrian Green, DSS, Kelly Myers, DSS, Famatta Galloway, DSS, Elyse Hamilton-Childress, CSS, Laura Lawrence, Safe Alliance, Danielle Hooke, Safe Alliance, Jamie Sellers, Safe Alliance, Heather Johnson, Pat's Place, Craig Varnum, CMPD, Rashida Gittens, survivor, Audra Toussaint, Spencer Merriweather, NC Courts, Paige McThenia, NC Courts and Julia Hejazi, NC Courts.

During Phase I, a small subset of core FJC partners will co-locate and respond to the immediate needs of survivors by providing additional crisis services during the first few days following victimization.

Subsequent to the Phase 1 Planning Committee, the Operations Workgroup/Committee was created and includes the Department of Social Services (DSS) Economic Services Division (ESD) eligibility, Youth and Family Services (YFS) Services and Community Support Services (CSS) representatives. Famatta Galloway, ESD, and Adrian Green, YFS, will manage the assigned DSS Phase I staff. The inclusion of ESD, YFS and CSS services within the FJC is essential to ensure victims are able to immediately care for themselves and their families after abuse. Having these services available in the center provide an added layer of security by limiting the victim's need for multiple visits to multiple locations.

DSS and CSS representatives will contribute to planning and implementing processes in phase 1 for the center slated to open in late spring of 2020. The center will be located on the 2nd floor of the child & family services center.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

ICO4MCH Featured at Statewide Conference

During the November Building Power Across the Spectrum Conference, our colleagues from Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal & Child Health (ICO4MCH) educated HIV advocates on poverty as a social determinant of health.

They delivered an interactive experience to familiarize participants with how poverty is compounded by the impacts of intersectionality. It also explored the contrasts lens of class and the difficulty those who have not experienced poverty have grasping the magnitude of the struggle.

The message that poverty is a social construct that is not just a state of being, but an actual state of mind held by those affected really hit home. Participants left with the charge to take personal and professional responsibility for creating opportunity and being promoters of progress one person, and one encounter at a time.



Pictured L-R: Monica Gibbs, Kevin Thomas, James Wright, Myocia Young-Montgomery, Niambi Ivery, Cathy Henderson, Gabriela Francisco

Edible Landscape Project



The National Association of Counties (NACo) award winning Edible Landscape Project, targets food security in public health priority areas ensuring increased access to healthy, fresh and affordable local fruits and vegetables while diversifying Charlotte’s tree canopy. To date a total of four community orchards with a potential reach of over 30,000 people have been established.

The fourth edible landscape and fruit tree orchard was established on Saturday November 2, 2019 at Faith CME Church. A total of 145 edible fruit trees (75) and non-edible canopy trees (70) were planted in a collaborative community engagement style. Mecklenburg County Public Health (MCPH) department, through its Food Security team, partners with several community organizations to create the gardens and orchards (edible landscapes). Partners for the fourth installation included Faith CME, MCPH, Village HeartBEAT, Cooperative Extension, TreesCharlotte, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, Novant and The Males Place Inc.

The Edible Landscape Project is an example of how community representatives and food security stakeholders are engaged in the design of an intervention to address a public health priority. The prevention of chronic diseases and food insecurity remains a primary area of concern for the Mecklenburg County Public Health (MCPH) Department. To ensure sustainable installation and conservation, the team will reconvene on Saturday February 1, 2020 for tree care, maintenance and installation of the irrigation system including training of key parishioners. Additionally, Faith CME Church under the leadership of Dr. Sandra Gripper (senior pastor) and the parishioners will do an official dedication of the edible landscape and fruit tree orchard on Saturday February 1, 2020

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

LIEAP, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, begins this year on December 2, 2019 and runs through March 31, 2020. The federally-funded LIEAP provides eligible households with a one-time payment (paid directly to their heating vendor) to offset the high cost of heating during the cold-weather months. Depending on the household’s primary heating source, the payment will be \$300, \$400 or \$500 (an increase of \$100 over last year’s payments!).

Households containing a person aged 60 or more, or someone receiving disability benefits and services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services can apply for help covering the cost of heating their homes starting Monday, December 2, 2019. All households throughout Mecklenburg County can apply from Thursday, Jan. 2, 2020 through Tuesday, March 31, 2020. This year Mecklenburg County will take face to face applications at the Valerie Woodard Center (VCW) Suite 101, 3205 Freedom Drive, Charlotte, NC 28208

Customers presenting at other DSS locations to apply for LIEAP should be directed to the Valerie Woodard Center (VCW) for in person (face to face) applications, or, go online to <https://epass.nc.gov/CitizenPortal/application.do> to complete, print and mail-in, fax, or drop-off their application at any of our DSS locations. Applications cannot be submitted online at this time.

Homebound elderly or disabled persons unable to apply in person or unable to complete an e-pass application, can contact J1C (Just 1 Call) or our Customer Connection line at 704-336-3000.

Environmental Health Selected for National Program

Mecklenburg County Public Health (MCPH) has been selected to participate as a mentee local health department in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards) Mentorship Program. We are one of 37 sites selected to collaborate and partner directly with the National Association of County and City Officials (NACCHO) through support from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This project will focus on building capacity for integrating the Retail Program Standards at health departments. MCPH will be matched with mentor Southern Nevada Health District, NV, who will be providing guidance on the Self-Assessment and Standards 3, 7, and 9. NACCHO awarded a grant of \$14,000.00 for the period December 2019 – August 31, 2020.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS *CONTINUED*

Sixth Annual Community Veteran’s Summit



On October 29, Anthony Trotman, Mecklenburg County Assistant County Manager, Stacy Lowry, Community Support Services (CSS) Department Director, Janene McGee, CSS Veterans Services Division Director, and Rienna Nuber CSS Information and Education Coordinator attended the 6th Annual Community Veterans Summit.

The day was a review of the community’s accomplishments over the past six years. Veteran community leaders shared best practices and celebrated the public/private partnerships that have allowed Charlotte and the NCServes Networks to lead the way nationally.

CSS was joined by fellow Veterans, VA leadership, representatives from the four NCServes Networks, local, state and the federal government and elected officials, Corporate/Foundation funders, and our valued local partners. All were on hand to share news and information about the important work they are doing across our region to serve military-connected families.

Mecklenburg County Assistant County Manager Anthony Trotman and CSS Veterans Services Division Director Janene McGee served on panels to share their perspectives.



MissionCLT Veteran Workgroup Supports Charlotte’s Out of Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk

MissionCLT, Mecklenburg County’s Mayor’s Challenge Work Group tasked with reducing suicides among service members, veterans and their families using a public health approach to suicide prevention, came together to support Charlotte’s Out of the Darkness Suicide Walk on Saturday, Oct. 12. Community Support Services (CSS) Veterans Services Division Director, Janene McGee, co-leads the group, and Rienna Nuber, CSS Information and Education Coordinator, is a member of the workgroup's communication team.

Youth & Family Services Quarterly Provider Meeting

On October 25, Youth & Family Services (YFS) and Clinical Contractual Services (CCS) held their Quarterly Provider Meeting and the theme was the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Legislation and the role of the private child welfare provider. The Family First Prevention Services Act (H.R. 5456 (Family First)) was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018, as Public Law 115-123. Family First amended Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act to child welfare programs and policy.

This historic reform aims to change child welfare systems across the country by providing services to families who at risk of entering foster care. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for further guidance on Family First.

YFS and CCS hosted this forum within a panel presentation format with distinguished stakeholders. The panel was moderated by Tamika Williams, Associate Director – Child Care, of The Duke Endowment. The panelists included:

- Lisa T. Cauley-Child Welfare Director & Alycia Blackwell-Pittman Senior Policy Advisor-NC DHHS-State view
- Tim Decker Division of Youth Services Director Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) - National view
- Jaquia “Joe” Jaden, Say So - Customers view
- Matt Anderson- VP of Programs and Business Development Children’s Home Society-NC Provider view
- Jenny Cooper-Chief Research and Development Officer-Benchmarks NC - Advocate view



Along with our community partners and providers, we were also joined by our colleagues from Cabarrus, Catawba, Cumberland, Lincoln, Gaston, and Iredell County as our guests.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS

Public Health 2020 Mentorship Program

Public Health employees can sign up to participate in the 2020 Mecklenburg County Public Health Mentoring Program! The goals of the program are:

- To provide opportunities to enrich contributions to public health and further leadership.
- To enhance and strengthen the professional development of the public health workforce.



Employees must apply by Friday, December 20!
Mentors with enthusiasm and a commitment to enhance the public health workforce in Mecklenburg County are encouraged to apply by submitting an application here.

Mentees who are interested in learning more about public health, are new to public health or who would like support and guidance in their public health career are encouraged to submit their Mentorship Program Application for Mentees.

(See pic from December 5th Mentorship graduation)
Contact Kateesha.Blount@mecknc.gov and Kayla.Earley@mecknc.gov if you have questions.

Kathy Heatley and Angela Briseno Achieve Provider Status in Cognitive Processing Therapy



We're honored to present to you the latest CSS Prevention and Intervention Services Clinicians to finish Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) training! That's right! Kathy Heatley (pictured left) and Angela Briseno (pictured right) have achieved provider status in CPT!

Angela says, "I feel fortunate to work for a place that values professional development as well as providing evidence-based treatment." CPT is a cognitive-behavioral treatment focused on helping people who are "stuck" in their thoughts about a trauma and is one of the most effective treatments for post-traumatic stress disorders.

We know so many clients will benefit from this specialized treatment. Kathy explains, "It's a great way to enhance client-focused services by continuing to help them heal."

American Translators Association

Department of Social Services employees, Amy Maldonado and Gerardo Portilla attended the American Translators Association annual conference held in Palm Springs, CA from October 23-26. The conference provided valuable training in the area of interpretation and translation as well as afforded them the opportunity to network with other Interpreters from around the world.

Amy Maldonado successfully completed training to become licensed to provide The Community Interpreter training, which is a 40-hour class for interpreters to gain certification in interpreter and translation skills.



Gerardo Portilla Amy Maldonado

Congratulations to our newest grads in the Public Health family!



Niambi Ivery (Triple P – Positive Parenting Program)
Masters in Youth, Family and Community Sciences from NC State Univ.

Beverly Davis (WIC - Women Infant & Children)
Masters of Social Work from Johnson C. Smith University

Danielle Arrington (CDSA - Children's Developmental Services Agency)
Masters of Education in Child & Family Studies from UNC Charlotte

A Fresh Outlook for CSS Shelter Plus Care Client and Master Crafter Linda



If you sit down with CSS Homeless Services Case Coordinator Deborah Mayhew and ask her about Linda, one of CSS' Shelter Plus Care clients, she'll immediately light up.

Deborah will tell you all about Linda's sense of humor and bright smile. She will tell you how Linda is mean crafter and loves needleworking. She'll also tell you how much she is loving her new glasses.

During a home visit with Linda, Deborah heard her mention how she was having trouble getting new glasses on her own. Thanks to the services of Optometrist Dr. Lasheta David at INvision Family Eyecare, and fellow co-worker Terry Tiamd's recommendation, Deborah knew just who to call.

The two ventured on out to visit Dr. David and in just a few short weeks, Linda was rocking her new lenses! Dr. David provides our agency with one free service a month which has benefited so many. Thank you INvision Family Eyecare!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND HHS

Child Support Amnesty Week

During the week of October 21-26, Mecklenburg County Child Support Enforcement (MCCSE) had one of their semi-annual 2nd Chance Amnesty Weeks. The 2nd Chance Amnesty Event serves as an opportunity for non-custodial parents (NCPs) to come the office and take the necessary steps to get their child support case(s) back in right-standing. During this time, payments are accepted at the office, payment arrangements can be made via signing an amnesty agreement letter, and consent orders can be signed to address specific circumstances pertaining to a case. Also, during the event, NCPs with active orders for arrest (OFAs) can make arrangements that can lead to the OFA being stricken. This fiscal year, MCCSE added a new element to the Amnesty Project, genetic testing. This gives NCPs, custodial parents and children an opportunity to come into the office for genetic testing, and all fees during Amnesty Week are waived.

To ensure parents had the opportunity to take advantage of these services, MCCSE opened their doors outside normal business hours: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 26. In addition, over 4,500 letters were mailed. MCCSE collected \$3,495 in child support.

Special thanks to the members of MCCSE staff made themselves available on Saturday to serve customers: Cyd Anderson, Linda Rhyne-McKinley, Donald Manns, Bryson Dunmeyer, Elyse King, Sparkle Agnew, Dina Bratton, Rosa Pacheco, Ciara James and Gwendolyn Leary.

New Program Name – Same Great Services!

As part of the **NC Medicaid Managed Care Transformation** to Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs) **Pregnancy Care Management** will now be known as **Care Management for High-Risk Pregnant Women (CMHRP)**.



All pregnant women enrolled in managed care through PHPs will continue to receive a coordinated set of high-quality clinical maternity services through the Pregnancy Medical Program (PMP). This program will be administered as a partnership between PHPs and local maternity care service providers. A key feature of the program will be the continued use of the standardized screening tool to identify and refer women at risk for an adverse birth outcome to the CMHRP program coordinated and provided by Local Health Departments (LHDs). Together, these two programs will work to improve the overall health of women and newborns across the state. More information at <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/care-management>

Annual Carolinas Freedom Foundation Salute to Veterans Parade



On November 9, thousands enjoyed the Annual Carolinas Freedom Foundation Salute to Veterans Parade. This was the 24th year of the Community Support Services (CSS) led Carolinas Freedom Foundation Salute to Veterans Parade. There were approximately 3,000 spectators and about 2,500 participants, 75 organizations, in the parade this year. CSS thanks County staff, partners, local high school students and various corporations for making the day special.

968 Teens Receive Teen Dating Violence Prevention Education in November



Community Support Services Prevention and Intervention Teen Dating Violence [LoveSpeaksOut](#) team have been very busy! In just the month of November, the small but mighty team of three have reached 968 high school and middle school students across the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System.

Mecklenburg Transportation Services (MTS) Drivers Receive Dementia Friends Awareness Training



Transportation services provided by the MTS drivers of the Department of Social Services is essential for the quality of life of older adults and people with disabilities. Our drivers recently completed the Dementia Friends Awareness training in order to have a greater understanding of dementia and best practices for communicating with and serving people with dementia. Dementia Friends Awareness is part of a national and local initiative to raise awareness about dementia and make the community more dementia-friendly. MTS is the first transportation provider in our region to become Dementia-Friends!

HHS Assistant Secretary Visits VCW Community Resource Center

On September 24, Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Lynn Johnson visited the Mecklenburg County Valerie C. Woodard Community Resource Center (CRC) to tour the facility and receive updates on how Mecklenburg County provides Health and Human Services programming to residents. County Commissioner Elaine Powell, County Manager Dena Diorio, Assistant County Manager Anthony Trotman, HHS Department Directors and Executive staff from various community agencies participated in the meeting.

In addition to touring the facility, Ms. Johnson received information from community leaders from Novant Health, Smart Start, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte Works and Communities in School, regarding their partnership with the County in serving residents and the success they have experienced in enhancing opportunities for economic mobility and well-being. Discussions on Early Childhood Education, Foster Care and Adoption and Child Support Enforcement were also held with staff from these program areas.

Ms. Johnson recognized the Mecklenburg CRC as a “national best practice model”, and praised County leadership for their innovative approach and commitment to improving the quality of life for County residents, as well as stated the commitment of ACF to move “from a focus heavy on compliance to that of outcomes.”

Take-aways from the meeting include:

1. National Adoption Day is November 11th. There will be a request to Governor Cooper to have North Carolina participate in the recognition.
2. There will be a Regional Childcare meeting in Birmingham later this fall where additional policy support for states will be discussed as well as funding and best practices. Additional information on the use of federal funding versus state funding in North Carolina will be provided.
3. The Assistant Secretary is very interested in supporting integration efforts especially as it relates to Child Support and the importance of Fatherhood, and would like more information regarding local needs in this area.
4. A new TANF rule will be proposed in a few weeks in which Mecklenburg will provide comment.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND HHS *CONTINUED*

Central Piedmont Community College's 'Real Talk' Domestic Violence Presentations

In honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month CSS and the Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau have attended weekly Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) domestic violence awareness campus community panels at their various campus locations! This picture features the most recent panel from the Harper Campus!

Special thank you to the following staff members who have committed to participating on behalf of CSS this month: Courtney Lawrence, Brandolyn McPhail, Maria Zuluaga, JoAnn Hall Donovan Grant and Tanya Hughes. And special thank you to Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau Members, like Mecklenburg County Health Department Employee Pamela Blount, for being apart of the events!

Other panelists included reps from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Charlotte-Mecklenburg District Attorney's Office, Safe Alliance and CPCC's Office of Institutional Equity.



A Broad Community Engagement Process Underway for CoC Governance Charter

Since August 2019, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services (CSS) has led a broad community engagement process. The goal of this work is to develop a new Continuum of Care (CoC) Governance Charter. The CoC Governance Charter identifies the purpose, responsibilities and oversight of the CoC. The CoC is responsible for, among other things, operations (holding regular meetings and adopting a written board selection process); designating a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); planning; and preparing an application for funding. You can review an update on this important work, what it means for the community and ways to get involved [here](#).

A Community Conversation about Domestic Violence

October 29, Mecklenburg County Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell and Charlotte Councilman Braxton Winston held a townhall titled: Community Conversation about Domestic Violence.

CSS PISD Children's Clinician Amanda Justice gave the crowd an overview of Domestic Violence while CSS PISD NOVA Program Manager Donovan Grant served as guest on the panel. They represented CSS very well!

Hannah Kay Herdlinger from the Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau shared her story. Sa'idah Sudan, from Baitul Hemayah, Alba Sanchez, Latin American Coalition, Galen Cromartie, Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau, Bea Cote, Impact & Step Up to Family Safety, Rev. Marguerite Lee, Beauty for Ashes Ministry, Spencer Merriweather, District Attorney, Karen Parker, Safe Alliance, and Kimberly James-Williams, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Child Development-Community Policing were also part of panel discussions.



100 Acts of Kindness

During the month of November, Department of Social Services staff donated more than 100 items and disbursed more than 150 homeless care packets throughout the Charlotte Uptown area. Staff also signed thank you cards for local first responders and served lunch at Urban Ministry and Salvation Center for Hope.



NEW HIRES – WELCOME!**NOVEMBER****Department of Social Services**

Ebony Stowe, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Ashli Duryea, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Jennifer Singleton, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Jennifer Steele, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist II
 Qway Ferguson, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Shavonne Boatwright, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Cassandra Bland, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist II
 Emahjae Hayes, Youth & Family Services Division, Child Welfare Specialist II
 Shirene Abney, Youth & Family Services Division, Child Welfare Specialist II
 Rubia Charles, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Shakella Coleman, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Stephanie Robinson, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Jasmine Mcilwain, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 James Franklin, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Andrea Smith, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Kayala Coleman, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Jamel Sowell, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I
 Ogopemo Oulolguem, Economic Services Division, Human Services Specialist I

Public Health

Jade Swanson, Administrative Support Assistant II, Executive Administration
 Paulita Esquivel, Interpreter, Women's Health
 Djenane Johnson, School Nurse, School Health
 Christine Davison, Case Coordinator, Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)

DECEMBER**Community Support Services**

Emily Frazier Community Support Services Administrative Assistant III
 Kimberly Sanders Community Support Services Management Analyst

Department of Social Services

Danielle Thomas, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Renee Cokley, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Betsy Jean-Baptiste, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Cecilia Williamson, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Latrelle Moody, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Sauda Fuller, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Simone Stovall, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Krystal Stevens, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Jاليا Benson, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Shalonda Price, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Jemeriah Wilson, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Shireen Muhammad, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Christie Alston, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Marquita Douglas, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Brianna Blair, Human Services Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Keisha Malone, Child Welfare Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Frank Wright, Child Welfare Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Dion Brown, Child Welfare Specialist I, Department of Social Services
 Rachel Haas, Child Welfare Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Mays Jimenez, Child Welfare Specialist II, Department of Social Services
 Gayle Butterfield, Q & T Supervisor, Department of Social Services
 Christine Davison, Case Coordinator, Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)