

Davie County Consolidation Human Services Agency (CHSA)

Background

The Departments of Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis, Public Health, Senior Services, Social Services and Veteran's Services have been engaged in critical conversations, analysis and planning to determine what opportunities might exist under a different governance model for program administration and how services coordination through a combined health and human services agency (CHSA) could benefit the people served as well as the payers of those services. The strengths of the current independent agencies promote an environment and work culture that supports high quality care and services to consumers, community integration and value to the payers.

Although individually each of these departments are strong organizations, there is a need to prepare for program growth, continuously look for administrative efficiencies, and position Davie County to be a high performing service provider in all areas of Health and Human Services. Based upon these reviews and analyses, the work of the executive team and their commitment to success, the recommendation is to adopt a new governance structure to include a CHSA and to move forward with the redesign and implementation of a consolidated health and human services department.

Since the passage of HB438 in 2012, all counties have been afforded the opportunity to evaluate and make decisions about their county's governance model for certain Health and Human services agencies in order to best achieve the vision and mission for their county. To date, nearly one-third of all counties have adopted a new option of governance and moved forward in their design of a new service delivery system. A variety of reasons have been cited for why counties have made changes. While this list is not intended to be exhaustive, it does reflect some of the more common reasons for consolidation:

- Coordinate services by client or outcome.
- Improve access and service customization. This can be accomplished through increasing opportunities to cross train and improving referral processes.
- With a streamline span of control, the processes for education, advocacy and approvals can occur in a more efficient and effective way.
- Unify visioning within county. Counties have specific needs. Unified vision and mission sets the stage for stronger collaboration and coordination among agencies.
- Facilitate integration with other county departments.
- Facilitate administrative coordination. Efficiencies through cross training and/or streamlining areas such as reception, mail distribution and storage.

Introduction/Scope

Davie County engaged the executive leadership of Davie County Department of Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis, Public Health, Senior Service, Social Services and Veteran Services in the development of recommendations as they collaboratively work toward the planning for a CHSA. The goal stated included identifying both potential advantages and/or benefits of such

consolidation as well as potential challenges or detriments and approaches to overcoming those barriers. The proposed plan included:

- Proposing a new organizational structure. This process will include a review of current agency structures, conducting work sessions with county leadership to seek their input and preparing recommendations with the support of the leadership team.
- Assessing the benefits and challenges of a consolidated and/or shared CHSA budget. This process will include a review of agency budgets to be potentially consolidated, interviews with budget staff to seek their input, and preparing options and recommendations with the support of a defined leadership team.
- Evaluating opportunities to maximize revenues to assist in building a new HS complex. Based on the recommended budgets and structure of the new organization, outline space needs by category to include common, office, administrative and specialty spaces required along with potential participating revenues to support the new HS complex.

Review /Approach

Obviously, every health and human services program has a focus on assisting individuals in need and would easily fit within the vision and mission of a combined health and human services agency. With that being said, there are no hard lines to be drawn between many of the services provided and where the best or only fit within an organization should be nor are there any certain right or wrong answers to a structure. Any decisions made to restructure programs, services or administrative support areas should be evaluated and re-evaluated as changes and needs occur. Continuous analysis and feedback will be critical to ensuring effective change. Davie County leaders spent a significant amount of time discussing programs at both the service and activity level. They challenged themselves and their thinking by debating questions such as:

- Does program participant at agency “A” have to go to agency “B” before they can enroll in agency “A” program;
- How is “enrollment”, “intake” and “case management” defined in the various programs across agencies;
- What information is collected for various assessments;
- Are there structures that improve customer service and remove barriers such as transportation;
- Are there specific goals/outcomes that we desire to accomplish beyond those required;
- What state and/or federal changes should we be preparing to address/ implement;
- What are the goals/needs related to this programmatic effort;
- Could restructuring successfully address the programmatic/population needs;
- Could restructuring open funding opportunities not currently available;
- Could restructuring improve access and create efficiencies.

What has happened to date?:

- Department Heads and the County Manager have discussed efforts with each of their individual boards
- Budget Review to discuss ways to maximize revenue that we are currently missing

- A review of all programs and mapping of where duplication may exist and where sharing makes sense
- These 5 Departments met to discuss:
 - shared goals/outcomes
 - possible economies of scale and shared services
 - a new organizational structure
 - recommendations

Reasons why Consolidation of Health & Human Services (HHS) Matters:

- Targets our efforts reaching across agencies and programs to work in ways that have a greater impact than any individual agency, service, or program
- Avoids duplication
- Shares resources to gain economies of scale and efficiencies through better alignment of business processes and back office functions, revenue maximization, reinvestment of savings, and shared space (Revenue +Cost Avoidance=Savings, which will likely over time, not initially)
- Streamlines programs and services for citizens, stakeholders, and partners
- Promotes shared outcomes
- Increases capacity for services to be delivered to citizens in a seamless manner
- Improves communication among agencies and with key stakeholders in the community
- Pursue partnerships when a service or program can be better served vs county government being the lead entity
- Allows for a unified personnel system and realignment of staff based on functional areas
- Addresses staffing needs through repurposing positions as attrition occurs
- Promotes better cross-training of staff to work in a blended environment
- Maximize Federal and State Revenues to minimize county cost for construction of an eventual Human Services Complex

Our goals are to:

- Improve service delivery for citizens in a seamless manner
- Identify efficiencies and align business processes (shared back office functions, coverage, shared intake/triage functions, co-location opportunities, shared fleet, etc.)
- Improve revenue streams
- Create a unified personnel system
- Save dollars by:
 - Not filling vacancies before assessing needs of all agencies and repurposing positions where needed
 - Cross-training program staff to work in a blended environment
 - Combining back office functions and common services
 - Moving operations into shared space

Strengths noted by Department Heads:

- Pleased that department directors have been heavily involved and concerns heard.

- Increased knowledge of each other's programs/services/departments.
- Department Directors have learned a lot about each other's departments through this process. Yield a greater understanding and sense of importance of human services to our county leaders.
- It will help "all boats to rise".
- Will yield cost savings and increased revenues for which we are not/cannot currently tap into (state and federal funding is stagnant and not reliable, increasing our County share).
- Shared resources (staffing levels, office supplies, education, etc.) to help streamline business operations, outreach, workflow, and ensure coverage when staff are out.
- Better marketing/outreach for the entire HHS department to improve volunteerism and outreach.
- The multiple services complement each other well, and managing all of them it will allow us to utilize our dollars more effectively.
- Opportunity for expanded scope of resources/services through a streamlined approach to the customer/citizen. Clients can come to one place and take care of a multitude of needs. Sharing clients/customers will allow staff to meet the needs of the customer/citizen instead of just passing a client along to someone else.
- Will tap into other staff's abilities and talents. They can expand their knowledge base, learn new skills, and spend more time doing the things they are really good at and less time with those tasks that are not as much in their wheelhouse.
- State benefits for employees coming under the State Human Resources Act.

Next Steps:

- The Board of Commissioners (BoC) must pass a resolution to create a consolidated human services agency (CHSA).
- In order to do this, the BoC must first hold a public hearing/notice in newspaper.
- BoC must then appoint a CHSA board of no more than 25 persons (initially by merging DSS and Health Boards who both have already requested to maintain their current members on the new board).
- Initial CHSA Board is appointed by BoC only upon recommendation of a nominating committee comprised of members of the pre-consolidated Board of Public Health and Social Services Board.
- BoC appoints for 4 year terms, but can stagger initial appointments to less than 4 years so as to stagger board membership.
- The CHSA Board must consist of certain type of individuals as set forth in NCGS 153A-77 (c).
- CHSA Board will meet to act on a recommendation and consent to the County Manager appointing a Human Services Director who meets the statutory requirements.
- County Manager then hires or appoints a CHSA Director w/advice & consent of the CHS board.
- The CHSA director must then appoint a person who meets the statutory qualifications.
- BoC adopts the State Human Resources Act and becomes a "substantially equivalent" County.

- The new CHSA (and its new board) must assure compliance with laws related to State and Federal programs and conduct audits and reviews of human services programs, including quality assurance activities, and delegate authority from the new CHSA director to appropriate division heads. They must also comply with requirements 1-13 in GS 153A-77 (d).
- Departments become “Divisions” of the CHS Agency who report to the CHS Director.
- The County Manager assists with day-to-day supervision of the CHSA Director, but must confer with the CHSA Board.

CHSA Board Role:

- Appointed by the BoC once a vote on consolidation occurs (typically merge the current Social Services and Public Health Boards)
- Serve as a rule-making, policy making, and administrative board
- Hires/Fires the CHS Director with consent of the County Manager
- Relies on the CHS Director to have full authority over personnel related decisions
- Must promote data tracking, analysis, best practices, and drive innovation and change
- Serve in the community and be advocates for programs
- Ensure quality assurance reviews of programs is taking place
- Focus on achieving outcomes and results vs inputs and status quo
- Promote staff development
- Assist with community outreach and public relations
- Assure compliance with State and Federal laws
- Recommend creation of local human services programs
- Adopt local regulations and enforce them
- Analyze and set fee schedules for services
- Plan and recommend a consolidated human services budget to the County Manager

What is the role of the CHSA Director?:

- Appoint staff of the consolidated human services agency with the county manager's approval.
- Administer State human services programs.
- Administer human services programs of the local board of county commissioners.
- Act as secretary and staff to the consolidated human services board under the direction of the county manager.
- Plan the budget of the consolidated human services agency.
- Advise the board of county commissioners through the county manager.
- Perform regulatory functions of investigation and enforcement of State and local health regulations, as required by State law.
- Act as an agent of and liaison to the State, to the extent required by law.
- Meet the requirements of NCGS 130A-40(a).