



**Southern Regional Advisory Board (SRAB)
Meeting Minutes from January 22, 2026
Meeting: In-Person/WebEx
517 Peden St, Laurinburg, NC**

Members Present

In Person: Carol McCall, Commissioner Kirk Smith, Commissioner Duke Williams

Virtual: Chair Commissioner Rob Zapple, Marie Britt, Commissioner Marty Cooke, Commissioner Barbara Featherson, Walter Ferguson, Mary Ann Furniss, Steven Later, Commissioner John Ritter, David Stanley, Commissioner Wixie Stephens, Julie Varnam

Members Absent: Dr. Mollie Glenn, Commissioner James Leach, Jackie McLean, Commissioner Charles Peterson

Trillium Staff: Cecelia Peers-Regional Vice President (Southern), Sandra Dunlap-Administrative Coordinator/Recorder (Southern), Sean Kenny-Head of DSS Engagement

NCDHHS Staff: None

Guests: None

I. Call to Order: Chair Zapple called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. and welcomed members to the Southern Regional Advisory Board meeting and administered the roll call.

II. Adoption of the Agenda: Commissioner Cooke motioned to adopt the January meeting agenda; David Stanley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. Approval of November 2025 Minutes: Commissioner Barbara Featherson motioned to approve the November minutes; Mary Ann Furniss seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Public Comment: None

V. Oath of Office: Sandra Dunlap, Clerk to the Southern Regional Advisory Board administered the Oath of Office to:

- Commissioner Barbara Featherson
- Nicole Hopkins
- Commissioner John Ritter

VI. Child and Family Specialty Plan Presentation: Sean Kenny- Trillium Head of DSS Engagement (presentation distributed and attached to the meeting minutes)

- Reviewed Statewide Tailored Plans - Trillium Health Resources, Alliance Health, Partners Health Management, Vaya Health and their catchment areas.
- Trillium managed plans - Tailored Plan, Medicaid Direct, Innovations Waiver, State Dollars.
- Child Family Services Plan (Blue Cross Blue Shield-Healthy Blue Care Together).
- Trillium membership loss, transition process, and ongoing DSS engagement.
- Tailored Care Management (Trillium and contracted providers).

Mr. Kenny answered committee members' questions.

VII. Board Comments/Concerns: Chair Commissioner Zapple addressed each advisory board member for their comments or concerns.

- Marie Britt shared concerns about Medicaid funding and reminded the advisory board to keep advocating for providers.
- Commissioner Barbara Featherson commented on the lack of childcare due to budgeting issues. Commissioner Featherson also stated a young teen was the victim of a drive by shooting and asked if counseling resources for the siblings was possible. Cecelia Peers stated that Trillium will involve crisis services and offer counseling and support to families and school systems in response to those types of situations.
- Walter Ferguson announced that Life Springs Church has opened the Restoration Center in Sanford and offered gratitude for Trillium's support.
- Mary Ann Furniss asked about the financial report and the deficit. Cecelia Peers shared that Trillium opened the network, per CMS requirements around health parity, for some specialty care providers and that caused an uptick in

expenditures. Trillium has reviewed rates and are performing audits to ensure appropriate utilization of services which should lower the deficit.

- Nicole Hopkins shared gratitude for the support of Cecelia Peers and Trillium to assist in her work of substance use recovery and transportation efforts.
- Carol McCall voiced concern over the State budget and the impact it is having on communities.
- Commissioner John Ritter asked about the timeliness of crisis response. Cecelia Peers shared that Trillium issued an RFP and that Southeastern Integrated Care has staffed each county with a mobile crisis team. SEIC is working with Moore County as a co-responder model and prioritizing MCSO calls. Commissioner Ritter asked about for an update regarding the Trillium Grant St. building in West End. Ms. Peers stated that the building will be put up for sale soon.
- Commissioner Kirk Smith announced that Central Carolina Community College held a legislative breakfast. Senator Bergin mentioned that children with severe behavioral health needs are having to receive care out of state; Commissioner Smith stated the Children's Hospital is moving forward. Commissioner Smith attended the Re-entry simulation in Lee County and encouraged other advisory board members to attend a simulation.

He also had a meeting with Brent Gause of Southeastern Integrated Care and was informed that 911 is not relaying information to them for crisis services. Commissioner Smith wants to sit in on 911 calls in Lee and Moore County.

- David Stanley asked how Trillium determines the gaps and needs in services. Cecelia Peers stated she will follow up with Network and invite them to a future meeting.
- Commissioner Wixie Stephens has spoken with providers about being turned down for network services. Commissioner Stephens also stated people with mental health issues are clogging the court system and being stuck in jail due to bail reform.
- Julie Varnam addressed the lack of appropriate funds to support students' needs. Ms. Varnam offered gratitude to Cecelia Peers for her support and collaboration with the schools. She also stated that New Hanover Schools serves around 3,400 students with special needs.
- Commissioner Duke Williams commented that funding is needed in the communities and that there are people who don't know Trillium and the services offered. He encouraged advisory board members to engage with legislators to get the budget passed.

- Chair Commissioner Zapple announced the opening of the STAR (Stabilization and Re-entry) Center in New Hanover County that will provide 16 beds for detox and 20 beds for re-entry or recovery path.

VIII. Governing Board Report: Walter Ferguson and Cecelia Peers gave the latest report.

- i2i Conference was held January 13-15 and Joy Futrell-CEO gave a presentation.
- The Governing Board has three new at large members, Lizzie Tolar, David Allen, and Denauvo Robinson. A nominating committee reviewed the nominations.

IX. Southern Region CFAC Report: Mary Ann Furniss report on the latest SR-CFAC meeting.

- SR-CFAC met on November 13 and January 20 virtually.
- SR-CFAC has 13 members. Lee (1), Moore (3), Brunswick (3), Robeson (4), New Hanover (1), and Hoke (1), but are missing representation from Scotland, Columbus, Bladen and will be actively recruiting new members from those counties. The SR-CFAC membership now represents 4 SU, 4 MH, 3 IDD, 2 TBI.
- The SOMETHINGS APP was presented by Evelyn Cox, Director of Partnerships, gave a presentation offering online peer support for teens in mental health crisis at our November 13 meeting.

- SR-CFAC member Tommy Thompson from Bladen County passed away on Dec 16. Tommy was a wonderful active CFAC member and an excellent advocate for people in his area. He will be greatly missed.
- Quality Management: Fonda Gonzales, VP QM, gave us an update on Trillium Quality Management services and data. She also informed us that there was an opening on the Human Rights Committee for someone from the Southern region with IDD background.
- Cecelia Peers led a discussion on the request from another CFAC to have a Trillium-wide CFAC Mental Health Recovery Support Subcommittee.
- SR-CFAC received reports from Dena Hamilton-Community Liaison, Cecelia Peers-Regional Vice President, and Governing Board.

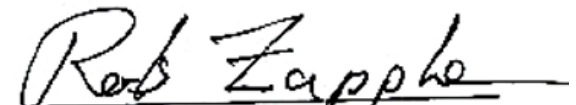
X. Regional VP Report: Cecelia Peers, Regional Vice President (Southern Region) reported on organizational and regional efforts. The report is included as an addendum to these minutes.

XI. Adjournment: Julie Varnam motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner John Ritter seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Dunlap, Administrative Coordinator



Commissioner Rob Zapple, Chair