



**Southern Regional Advisory Board (SRAB)
Meeting Minutes from November 12, 2025
Meeting: In-Person/WebEx
Trillium Office-3809 Shipyard Blvd, Wilmington**

Members Present

In Person: Chair Commissioner Rob Zapple, Commissioner Marty Cooke, Mary Ann Furniss, Commissioner Kirk Smith, David Stanley, Julie Varnam

Virtual: Marie Britt, Commissioner Barbara Featherson, Carol McCall, Jackie McLean, Commissioner John Ritter, Commissioner Duke Williams

Members Absent: Walter Ferguson, Dr. Mollie Glenn, Steven Later, Commissioner James Leach, Commissioner Charles Peterson, Commissioner Wixie Stephens

Trillium Staff: Cecelia Peers-Regional Vice President (Southern), Sandra Dunlap-Administrative Coordinator/Recorder (Southern)

NCDHHS Staff: None present.

Guests: Megan Burruss

I. Call to Order: Chair Zapple called the meeting to order at 4:37 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 November meeting agenda; Carol McCall seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. Approval of July & September Minutes: Carol McCall motioned to approve the July & September minutes; Julie Varnam seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Public Comment: None

V. Presentation – SOMETHINGS App: Evelyn Cox-Director of Partnerships, shared a presentation on the SOMETHINGS App. Presentation attached to the minutes.

- Addressing the teen Mental Health Crisis
- Teen engagement
- Meeting Teens Where They Are
- Trained and Certified Peer Support Mentors
- App Ease of Use

Ms. Cox answered questions from board members.

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

- Mary Ann Furniss commented on The Healing Place and the strategic planning underway to provide more access to their services and the successes of the program.
- Carol McCall commented on working to bring the SOMETHINGS App awareness to Scotland County.
- Jackie McLean commented she would like to have a meeting with school systems and parents to share the SOMETHINGS App.
- Commissioner Smith commented he will share the SOMETHINGS App information with the Lee County Schoolboard, DSS, and the Health Department. Southeastern Integrated Care has established an office near the Police Department. He offered praise for Cecelia Peers and her support. Mary Ann shared that Cecelia has done an outstanding job at supporting the faith-based community.
- David Stanley shared a concern for the vulnerable Trillium members and the possibility that they will lose services due to the changes in Medicaid. He asked for details on what Trillium will do to help minimize any loss.
- Julie Varnam shared a concern about allowing students accessing the SOMETHINGS App without parental knowledge and parents should be involved.
- Commissioner Williams commented that the parents should authorize use of the SOMETHINGS App for their children.
- Commissioner Zapple commented on the main library in New Hanover and the teen section addition that limits access to those over 19. He stated having teen-oriented areas within libraries has been receiving positive outcomes.
- Commissioner Cooke commented that the severity behavioral health issues has escalated through the years, and asked what has been the driving factor and what should be done to resolve it. Commissioner Williams responded to

Commissioner Cooke's comment that we must be pro-active and not reactive and get in front of the problem.

VII. Governing Board Report: On behalf of Walter Ferguson, Cecelia Peers gave the latest report.

- The board discussed a process to identify at large members to fill the vacancies of those who are rolling off. An application process is on the Trillium website. Staff will review the applications for any conflicts of interest and share all candidates with board established nominating committee.
- Property realignment updates for both owned and leased office space of Trillium.
- Finance committee convened and gave an overview of finances and Medicaid rebase.
- Pre-authorization review process for providers offering specific services in relation to the Mental Health Parity Act.

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

- CFAC Membership, the SR-CFAC now has 14 members. We have members now from Lee (1), Moore (3), Brunswick (3), Robeson (4), Bladen (1), New Hanover (1), and Hoke (1), but are missing representation from Scotland, Columbus, and will be actively recruiting new members from those counties. Our membership now represents 5 SU, 4 MH, 3 IDD, 2 TBI.
- Kratom Presentation, Jason Swartz-Senior Pharmacy Director shared information on Kratom.
- The CFAC members received reports from our Community Liaison, Dena Hamilton, and Cecelia Peers giving CFAC their usual excellent reports on what's going on at Trillium and in the communities in our Region.
- Mamie Hutnik shared information regarding the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) for distribution.

IX. Trillium Regional Vice President Report:

- No changes have been made to funding since the July mini budget was passed. The mini-budget funds Medicaid rebase at \$600mil, which is a shortage according to DHHS. DHHS has confirmed a 3% rate reduction to

all services with 8% for long term care facilities and PRTF and 10% to ICFs. Those went into effect on 10/1.

- Last week Governor Stein rallied disability advocates to share their stories of how they are impacted by Medicaid and called the general assembly to an extra session on 11/17 to work on a plan to fund Medicaid.
- December 1 the Child and Family Specialty Plan managed by Blue Cross will go into effect. Blue Cross has hosted information sessions around the Specialty Plan.
- Trillium Event Sponsorships – In October and November, Trillium is sponsoring 9 events in the Southern Region and 2 statewide. A few include:
 - Waccamaw Siouan Tribe Pow Wow
 - East Coast Healthcare Summit
 - Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide Prevention
 - Hoke Youth Health Event
- SEIC took over MCM services in Hoke, Moore and Lee on 11/1. They will be serving as a MCM provider in Robeson mid-November and Scotland in December.
- Trillium is building awareness of the crisis continuum by developing and sharing additional information on new, upcoming and existing crisis services through newly developed brochures, trainings & 988 materials. This will be done at events and community meetings.
- First Lady Anna Stein announced the implementation of four Forensic ACT teams, one of which will be in New Hanover County. These teams will work with people who experience SPMI and are justice involved or at risk, to help avoid long stays in jail or being unable to proceed with trial due to lack of MH treatment.
- The inclusive playground at Robbins Heights Park in Raeford is complete. The ribbon cutting for the Raeford is tentatively scheduled for 12/8.
- The playground at I.E. Johnson Center in Scotland County will be completed soon with a ribbon cutting likely in early January.
- Substance Use Prevention for parents, students and teachers – Trillium is utilizing “ABC Funds” (bottle sales tax from ABC purchases) from some counties to support SU prevention by offering training and education to parents, students and teachers.
 - Sold Out Youth foundation offers an online curriculum for MS & HS students around the dangers of fentanyl
 - Poe Center offers in person prevention education to school staff, parents and students. We presented an annual plan to Columbus County Board of Education on a multi-prong approach to vaping prevention.
 - AHEC prepared an online training for school nursing and student support staff.
 - NC State STEM lab can provide on-site class sessions looking at the impact of vaping on cells. This is for MS & HS science/health classrooms.

- We work with each county on how their ABC funds are used and which options are priorities for them.
- Thriveworks – Dena and Cecelia recently provided a presentation to this group of parents with children who have IDD diagnoses.
 - Health Equity Summit – Cecelia presented at the Sokoto House Health Equity Summit focused on Families, Mental Health and Substance Use.
 - Moore County Child Resource Fair – Crystal and Cecelia presented to families about accessing care and services for children through Trillium.
 - Intersection of Theology and Therapy – a panel discussion on mental health and how faith plays a role, hosted at St. James Episcopal church in Wilmington
 - Brunswick Mental Health Summit – Commissioner Frank Williams and the Rotary.
- I2i Winter Conference January 13-15 2026 at the Benton Convention Center, Winston Salem.
- Network & Services Updates
 - Coastal Horizons Center just opened their new Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program in Wilmington. PSR is a day program for adults with SPMI, which helps with ADL's, symptom management, and positive social engagement.
 - Recruitments Open
 - Opioid Treatment Program – Lee County
 - PSR – Brunswick County
- Attend Behavior App available to parents of Trillium members with ADHD, Autism and I/DD to help manage challenging behaviors. Postcard campaign occurring soon and sign up available on the Trillium website.
- Training Events
 - Re-Entry Simulations: Lee RES is scheduled for 1/13/26. Scotland County's Re-Entry Council requested a RES through Trillium. This is tentatively scheduled for 2/17 at Laurinburg Presbyterian Church.
 - SCE Simulations: Sampson County (Clinton) 11/13/25, Edgecombe 12/4/25

X. Adjournment: Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Cooke seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


 Sandra Dunlap, Administrative Coordinator


 Commissioner Rob Zapke, Chair