

**Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2023**

**MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 on the 2nd floor of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina at 2:35 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap and Commissioners Leigh Altman, Patricia “Pat” Cotham, Arthur Griffin, Mark Jerrell, Vilma D. Leake, Laura J Meier, Elaine Powell, and Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
County Manager Dena R. Diorio
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commission Cotham was absent until noted in the minutes.

23-0147 WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Board received budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2024 from the Women's Advisory Board.

Jamilah Espinosa, Advisory Board Chair, made the presentation.

Background: the Women’s Advisory Board (WAB) seeks to identify periodically the status of women in Mecklenburg County; to recommend ways to work toward the betterment of the status of women in education, employment, family, community, health, law, finance, and social services; to work collaboratively with other organizations; and to provide community leadership opportunities by initiating and promoting programs designed to serve the needs of women.

Jamilah Espinosa currently serves as the Advisory Board Chair. The members and leadership of the WAB are appreciative of the support and encouragement received from the Board of County Commissioners.



Women's Advisory Board

Presented to the Mecklenburg
Board of County Commissioners
March 14, 2023

Key Priorities

Identified Based on Statistical Data and Community Feedback

Maternal Health

Child Care

Accessible Housing

Mental Health

Human Trafficking



Maternal Health

Findings

- NC has the 11th highest infant mortality rate in the US.
- According to the CDC, 60% of maternal deaths are preventable.
- In NC, the preterm birth rate among Black women is 52% higher than the rate of all other women.
- Black women are 3x more likely to die from pregnancy than White women.



Maternal Health

Recommendations

- Continue to prioritize health services within zip codes already identified
- Promote collaboration among community-based organizations that are working to improve maternal health
- Improve maternal health care at local jail



Child Care

Findings

- **Affordability**
 - Average Cost in Mecklenburg County \$14,000 annually
- **Accessibility**
 - Single Mothers, Non-Traditional Hours
- **Quality**



Child Care

Recommendations

- Continue and Expand Child Care Subsidy Program
- Consider providing childcare assistance to essential workers
- Provide funding for capacity grants for new providers to assist in startup costs



Commissioner Cotham joined the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Accessible Housing



Accessible Housing

Recommendations

- Provide grants or loans to nonprofits/developers to preserve existing affordable housing through rehabilitation and maintenance programs
- Expand rental assistance programs, home repair programs, and down payment programs
- Address systematic issues such as discrimination that contribute to lack of affordable housing
- Invest in transit infrastructure to support neighboring towns



Mental Health

Findings

- Recent CDC study found 1 in 10 women reported an episode of major depression within the last year.
- Nearly 3 in 5 teen girls (57%) felt sad or hopeless.
- 30% of teen girls reported considered dying by suicide.



Mental Health

Recommendations

- Expand MeckHope to other languages
- Provide additional funding for social workers and mental health professionals at CMS
- Explore pipeline program with local colleges to recruit clinicians and social workers to the County



Human Trafficking

Findings

- The exploitation of people for labor services or commercial sex acts
- Charlotte's Crescent Area: 28269, 28208, 28213, 28216, and 28212
- 170 suspected and confirmed child sex exploitation cases 2020-2022

Average Age
of Victimization
was 14.5 years
old




Human Trafficking

Recommendations

- Prevention and education programs
- Fund existing organizations that support victims
- Expand CMS social worker capacity
- Provide funding for ongoing training for providers: Police, EMS, DSS, CMS



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Thank you!

Jamilah L. Espinosa, Esq., Chair

Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board
Meckcounty.wab@gmail.com



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Comments

Commissioner Meier said she like the term “accessible housing.” She asked who provided maternal care in the Mecklenburg County Jail. *County Manager Diorio explained that Wellpath was the provider. She said they would have to speak with the sheriff regarding concerns with better maternal healthcare. Ms. Espinosa added that it is important to connect women to maternal healthcare when they are released from the Jail.*

Commissioner Leake thanked the presenter. Commissioner Leake said she tried to work with Johnson C. Smith University, meeting with them for two hoping to come up with some means of providing more support for social workers. She said she was waiting to see if the new president would work with the County in providing support.

Commissioner Altman commented on sexual violence against women and girls and the suicide epidemic effecting boys. She thanked the speakers for their work in bringing the issues into light.

Commissioner Griffin asked regarding pre-term birth if they tagged young ladies when they were

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initially pregnant and had an interaction with health services and if they kept up with them through the first 37 weeks. *County Manager Diorio explained that they did eligibility check, but they didn't tag and follow them.*

County Manager Trotman said they would go into the standard plans and there were care management people who would coordinate their care. He said there were a few programs in Public Health that they had access to as well. He said once the eligibility specialist determined their eligibility, they would choose a managed care plan.

Commissioner Griffin asked if there were people in the community the County could partner with. *is there someone we could partner with. Ms. Espinosa said the County supported the Family Nurse Partnership through CareRing. She said they would sign up themselves and would have visits by nurses. She said DSS hands out pamphlets and advertised the programs.*

Commissioner Griffin said we should be reaching out and educating pre-term births as well as infant mortality. *County Manager Diorio said they were starting their Prenatal to 3 initiatives.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell highlighted slides 9 and 11. She said the average age of victims was when they were in the 8th grade, which was a critical year. She said CMS did a lot but really needed the County's support. She said those resources for mental health was needed in the schools to reach more children.

Commissioner Powell talked about human trafficking and asked, as part of the education and prevention request, if there were any requests for education on how one would recognize human trafficking. *Ms. Espinosa said they were usually already identified by CMPD through interviews. She said that not every case went through CMPD. She said the budget request did not include identification because victims are usually first encountered by police or healthcare professionals. Instead, the budget request included funding for organizations that educate the community about identifying instances of human trafficking.*

Commissioner Powell asked that they make a more specific request regarding funding.

Jerrell underscored the importance of conversation. He said regarding the complexity, he was not convinced that government alone could solve the problem. He said the business community had an important role that they could play. He asked if anybody was working on a comprehensive strategy that would bring all the key stakeholders together with government to address the issues. Ms. Espinosa explained that there are various task forces addressing the issues individually.

Chair Dunlap said there were multiple recommendations and asked County Manager Diorio to provide a follow up on what she found and whether the staff were following up on the recommendations outlined in the presentations and what they were doing to address the issues.

23-0150 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVISORY BOARD FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Board received budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2024 from the Domestic Violence Advisory Board.

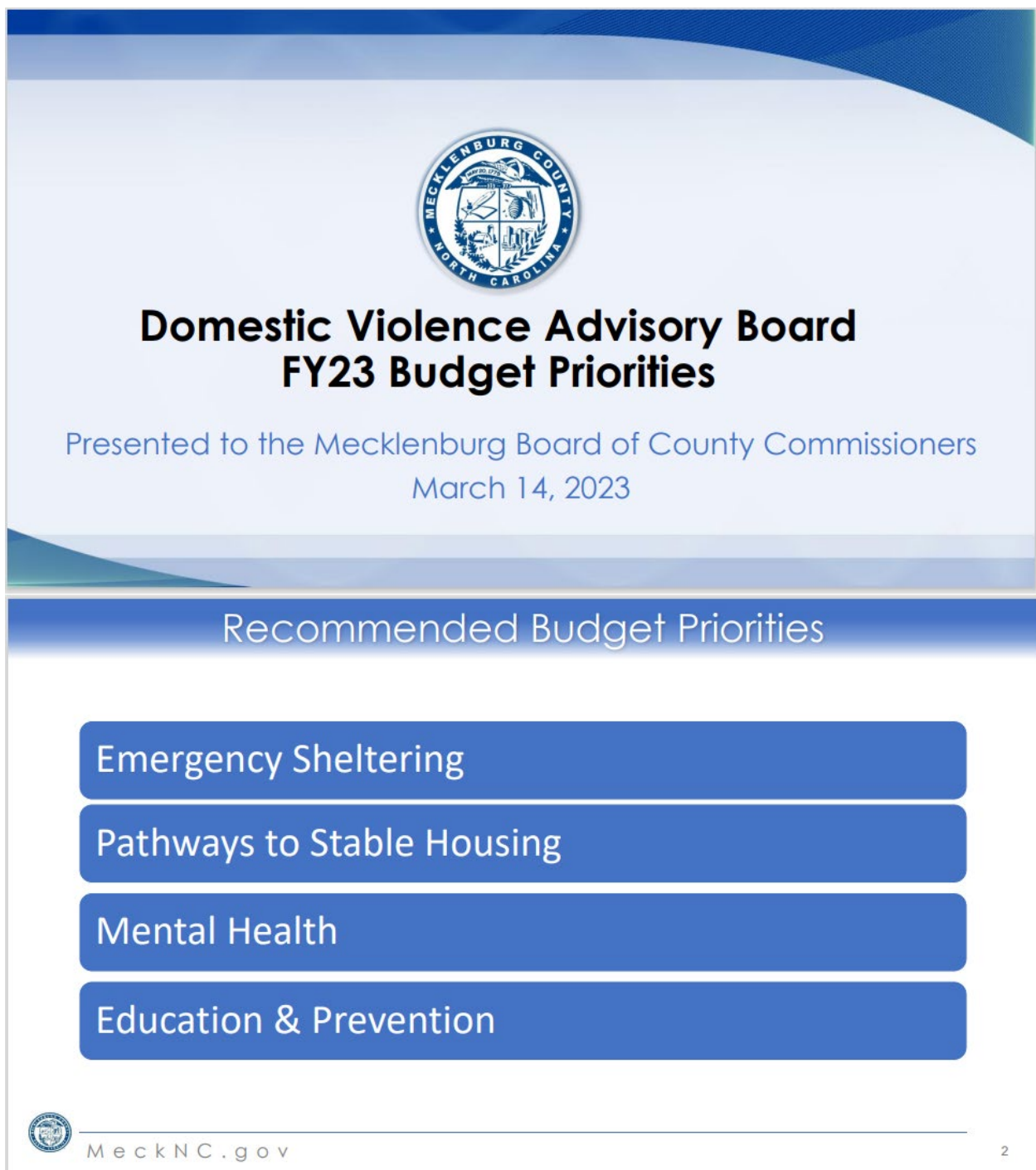
Background: The Domestic Violence Advisory Board (DVAB) is the official citizen advisory commission on domestic violence issues. The members are appointed by and report to the Board of County Commissioners and Charlotte City Council.

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The Board periodically reviews and evaluates all Charlotte and Mecklenburg County domestic violence services, makes appropriate recommendations to Charlotte City Council and the Board of County Commissioners to identify gaps, or need for additional services to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence and their children; and, provides vigorous advocacy for domestic violence awareness and its related costs to victims and the community.

The DVAB receives staff support from the Mecklenburg County Community Support Services Prevention and Intervention Services. Tya Patterson-Powe currently serves as the Advisory Board Chair.

Racquel Ward, Domestic Violence Advisory Board Secretary, gave the presentation.



The image shows a presentation slide with a blue and white color scheme. At the top center is the Mecklenburg County seal. Below it, the title "Domestic Violence Advisory Board FY23 Budget Priorities" is displayed in bold black text. Underneath the title, it says "Presented to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners March 14, 2023" in a smaller blue font. A blue horizontal bar contains the text "Recommended Budget Priorities" in white. Below this bar are four blue rounded rectangular boxes, each containing a priority in white text: "Emergency Sheltering", "Pathways to Stable Housing", "Mental Health", and "Education & Prevention". At the bottom left is a small Mecklenburg County seal and the text "MeckNC.gov". At the bottom right is a small number "2".

Domestic Violence Advisory Board
FY23 Budget Priorities

Presented to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners
March 14, 2023

Recommended Budget Priorities

- Emergency Sheltering
- Pathways to Stable Housing
- Mental Health
- Education & Prevention

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Emergency Sheltering

Findings

- 802 households that contacted Mecklenburg County Coordinated Entry (CE) in search of housing in FY22 indicated they had experienced domestic violence
- 153 of these households indicated they were actively fleeing domestic violence
- Safe Alliance provided short-term emergency shelter or hoteling to 467 adults and 382 children during FY22
- Salvation Army Center of Hope becomes overflow for a significant number of domestic violence households who cannot find shelter elsewhere or exhaust their stay at Safe Alliance



Emergency Sheltering

Recommendations

- Support flexible funding that adds capacity for emergency sheltering and keeps families together, such as funding for domestic violence hotel partnerships
- Support flexible funding that prevents emergency shelter stays by assisting survivors with housing-stability-related needs such as rent, utilities, car repairs, child care, etc.
- Support strategic collaborations that provide specialized services for domestic violence survivors within general population safety net settings, such as the Salvation Army Center of Hope



Pathways to Stable Housing

Findings

- Due to recent County and federal investments, the maximum capacity of local domestic violence rapid rehousing programs has increased from 12 households to about 67 households
- Mecklenburg County currently invests in funds to assist victims of intimate partner violence with one-time housing stability- and safety-related needs. In FY22, the fund was exhausted by April after assisting 56 households with a total of \$100,000.
- Coordinated Entry and emergency shelter data demonstrate that demand for stable housing opportunities continues to exceed the supply
- Domestic violence survivors often face unique barriers to obtaining stable housing, such as suddenly becoming a single-parent household, lacking reliable childcare, having inconsistent work history, or experiencing financial abuse as part of the domestic violence



Pathways to Stable Housing

Recommendations

- Continue to invest in the County-funded domestic violence rapid rehousing program, Housing for Good
- Continue to invest in and expand the fund to assist survivors of intimate partner violence with housing-stability and safety-related needs
- Support pathways to affordable, stable and safe housing for domestic violence survivors as well as strategic partnerships that expand housing-related supports for survivors



Mental Health

Findings

- Although mental health is not a cause of domestic violence, it is frequently a co-existing issue
- Mecklenburg County invests in clinical mental health services for child observers and adult or teen victims/survivors
 - Community Support Services had 681 active adult clients in FY22, 273 active child/teen clients
- Mecklenburg County invests in non-clinical psychoeducation for offenders through NOVA (New Options for Violent Actions) as well as one licensed clinician
 - CSS NOVA program served 561 offenders in FY22
- Local mental health supports for secondary survivors are limited and not provided through the County (secondary survivors, include family members and friends who are affected by the domestic violence)



Mental Health

Recommendations

- Continue County investments in mental health services related to domestic violence
- Explore a pipeline program with local colleges and universities to strengthen recruitment of mental health providers
- Support funding for mental health services for domestic violence offenders, to help address co-existing issues and promote long-term wellness together with accountability
- Support funding for mental health services for family members and friends who are impacted by domestic violence



Education & Prevention

Findings

- Mecklenburg County has a high incidence of domestic violence, which indicates the importance of education and prevention:
 - CMPD received 3,215 domestic violence-related calls for service in 2022 (11% of all calls for service)
 - The Greater Charlotte Hope Line received 8,173 calls for service in FY22
 - The 26th Judicial District received nearly 4,000 domestic violence protective order filings in 2022
 - Domestic violence was involved in 32% of YFS cases in FY22



Education & Prevention

Findings

- Mecklenburg County currently invests in teen dating violence prevention and supports general community education
 - During FY22, the Community Support Services LoveSpeaksOut program provided 227 presentations to 5,810 teens in schools and community settings
 - Mecklenburg County coordinates the Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau
- Mecklenburg County most recently participated in a major domestic violence awareness initiative in 2013 by piloting the eNOugh campaign with the State of North Carolina



Education & Prevention

Recommendations

- Continue County investment in teen dating violence prevention, and support the DV Speakers Bureau
- Support healthy relationships education and violence prevention programming for children and youth at an early age
- Support funding for a robust, renewed community-wide awareness campaign, to include all forms of domestic violence and culturally specific content



Thank you!

Racquel Ward, Secretary



Domestic Violence Advisory Board

with credit to the Mecklenburg County Women's Advisory Board for this presentation format



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Comments

Commissioner Griffin said it was an extraordinarily challenging work and thanked the DVAB.

Commissioner Leake thanked the presenters and made comments regarding domestic violence. She said physical mistreatment is not talked about in certain settings, for example, the faith community. She commended the County and the Board regarding the wrap-around services.

Commissioner Meier said she serves as the liaison for the DVAB. She said the offenders thrived in silence of the victim.

Commissioner Cotham asked Ms. Ward if there was any assistance for people who needed to obtain a 50c restraining order from a person with whom they did not have a relationship.

Commissioner Cotham said the State took mental health away from the County in 2019. She asked if they ever send recommendations to legislators on issues where they had primary responsibility. Ms. Ward said someone who was on the Board was appointed to the state level related to domestic violence, so they felt they had an advocate at that level.

Director Lowry said work that is done by the DVAB was focused solely on intimate partner relationships.

23-0168 AGE FRIENDLY MECKLENBURG PLAN UPDATE

The Board received as information a presentation on the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Plan.

Greg Tanner, Adult Services Division Director, and Kristine Arnau, Social Services Program Director gave the presentation.

Background: Age-Friendly Mecklenburg is an initiative that facilitates the collective planning of not-for-profit, higher education, faith-based, private, and governmental organizations along with community residents to improve the quality of life for older adults. Having such a collaborative effort is vital, since by the year 2035, an additional 140,000 residents aged 55 and older will be living in Mecklenburg County, of which 100,000 will be aged 65 and older. This is by far the fastest growing age group in the County; in fact, 45% of the total population growth between now and 2035 will come from growth in those aged 55+.



Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Update

Department of Social Services

Services for Adults

Division Director

Greg Tanner

March 2023

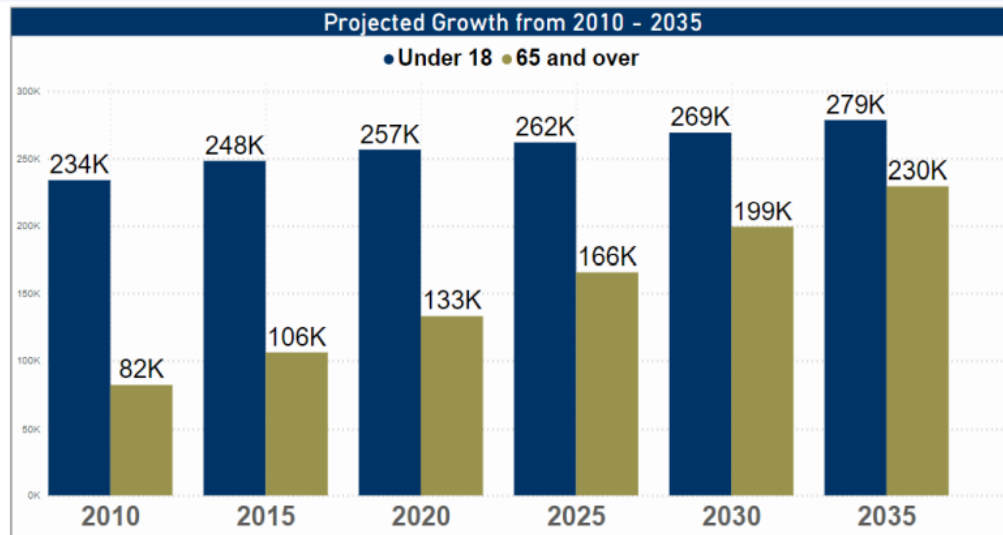
Dena Diorio
Mecklenburg County Manager

Anthony Trotman
Deputy County Manager

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg



Aging Population Growth



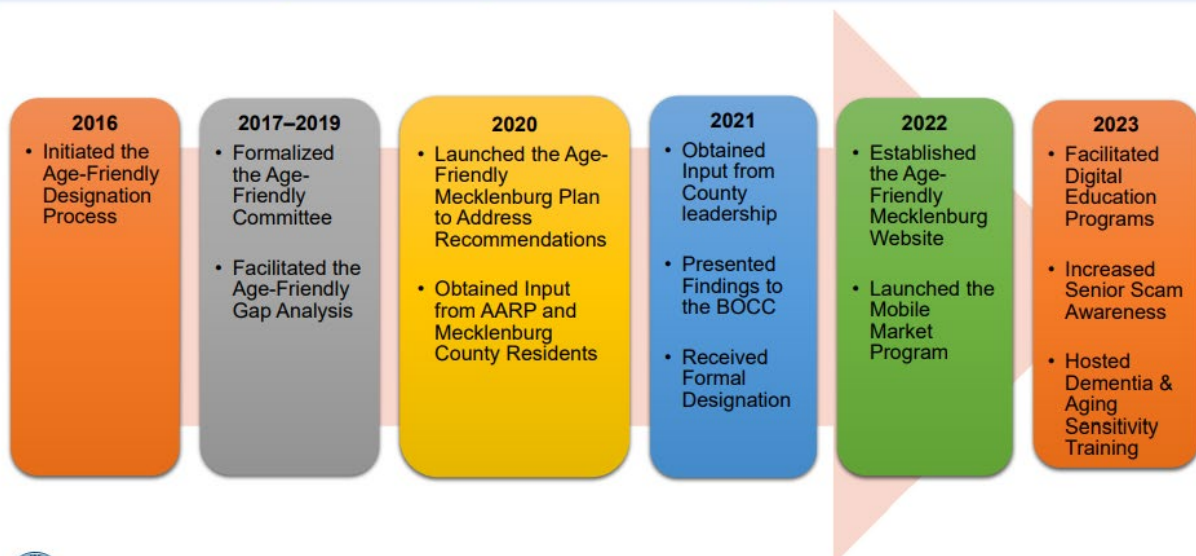
County Population Projections | NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM)

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Dena Diorio
 Mecklenburg County Manager

Anthony Trotman
 Deputy County Manager

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Timeline



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Dena Diorio
 Mecklenburg County Manager

Anthony Trotman
 Deputy County Manager

Age-Friendly Framework: AARP Eight Domains of Livability



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Dena Diorio
 Mecklenburg County Manager

Anthony Trotman
 Deputy County Manager

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee

- AARP
- Alzheimer's Association
- Atrium Health
- Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)
- Charlotte Dept. of Transportation (CDOT)
- Centralina AAA
- Charlotte LGBTQ Elders
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library
- Eloquent Ideas
- Faith Communities/Churches
- Greater Charlotte Apartment Assoc.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Humana
- Inlivan
- Johnson C. Smith University
- Mecklenburg County Departments/Agencies
- Mecklenburg Metropolitan Interfaith Network
- PACE of the Southern Piedmont
- Progressive AE
- Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte Senior Residents/Retirees
- Southminster
- The Ivey
- UNC Charlotte Gerontology
- Village HeartBEAT



Age-Friendly Initiatives

Domain 1: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	Domain 2: Transportation	Domain 3: Housing	Domain 4: Social Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 Seniors Served Good Samaritan Partnership Shoe Distribution • Promoted Mecklenburg County Senior Games • 1000+ Fans Distributed: The Cooling Station Project • Applied Age-Friendly Lens to Huntersville Greenway* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 115,000+ Quality of Life Trips: grocery chains, faith-based communities, personal wellness, and more* • \$170,000+ Customer Savings: Free fare for Quality-of-Life Trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Modification Referrals: Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte and Matthews • Aging In Place Resources: Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte and Safe at Home Program* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-Based Programs: Chronic Disease Self-Management and Fall Prevention* • Older American Month Celebrations • Seniors' Nutrition Program • UNCC Nursing Collaborations • 1000+ Homebound Seniors Engagement Packets*



Age-Friendly Initiatives

Domain 5: Respect & Social Inclusion	Domain 6: Civic Participation & Employment	Domain 7: Communication & Information	Domain 8: Community Support & Health Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally-compatible meals for underserved communities. • First Baptist West Church • Universal Institute for Successful Aging of the Carolinas • Latin American Coalition • LGBTQ+ Elder Inclusivity & Resources* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Education Sessions* • Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagements* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 750+ Participants • 6 Districts • 2,500+ Digital Views* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Street Billboard • Facebook • Twitter • 900+ Webpage Visits* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,700+ Referrals via Project CARE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respite Vouchers • Caregiver Education • 12 Community Locations with Mobile Market Program* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,500+ Seniors Served



Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Outreach











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Dena Diorio
Mecklenburg County Manager


Anthony Trotman
Deputy County Manager

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Upcoming Age-Friendly Initiatives




Encourage seniors to walk & remain active.




Partner with financial institutions to increase awareness and prevent financial exploitation of seniors.




Educate adults on ways to navigate technology for transportation needs.




Offer classes to help older adults adapt to technology and digital platforms.




Promote services to support homeowners and renters desire to age in place.




Identify innovative methods of communication to increase accessibility for aging residents.



Identify facility options for evidence-based program delivery in various communities.



Increase awareness of and expand services to assist families and unpaid caregivers.




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Dena Diorio
Mecklenburg County Manager

Anthony Trotman
Deputy County Manager


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Age-Friendly Mecklenburg



Questions

Phone: 980-314-6070
Email: AFMeck@MeckNC.gov
<https://www.mecknc.gov/dss/Pages/Age-Friendly-Mecklenburg.aspx>



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Dena Diorio
Mecklenburg County Manager

Anthony Trotman
Deputy County Manager

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Comments

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said her number one complaint from citizens was about transportation. She said she wanted to hear more about the awareness for the LGBTQ community in their later years as they suffer from depression, suicide due to hate, and being unaccepted in nursing homes, and no partner benefits.

Mr. Tanner said they were currently in the midst of working with a consultant doing a comprehensive 360 study of the entire transportation operation. He said some recommendations have come back. He said one of the things that did come out was a need to hold vendors more accountable. He said they did have a policy in place to address those issues. He said during the pandemic, various vendors did lose some drivers who went to other employment due to hire wages. He said they were trying to get some of those positions filled, in the meantime they wanted to make sure they provided on-time, most appropriate transportation service. He said they were also putting out a bid for new vendors. He said they needed large companies that could hold the volume, as they were averaging about 1400 trips per day.

Commissioner Leake thanked them for their report. She spoke about working with seniors to provide training for the use of electronics. Mr. Tanner said that the County is working with the Fill My Cup organization at VCW on digital technology education for seniors. He said it was a 4–6-week program. He said they were looking for additional seniors to come in. He said the program was funded through AARP.

Ms. Arnau said regarding the aging community of the LGBTQ+, they had an open conversation to better understand what they could do to increase their inclusivity. She said they also met with SAGE USA, which is a national resource, that provided resources specific to the aging community. She said they hosted a webinar with the NC Social Security Admin Office this past November to overview same sex benefits.

Commissioner Cotham said there are senior groups of LGBTQ+ men she suggested they could possibly seek speakers among them.

Commissioner Cotham asked if there was a volunteer coordinator who would come up with a program where volunteers would make weekly calls or send birthday cards. Ms. Arnau said they had nothing in place as of now but were looking to cater to those needs. She said they promote volunteer opportunities although they haven't identified anything specific yet. She said they were thinking innovatively about how it could be done. She said they were also calling on other best practices with other counties to find out what is being done and could be used here.

Commissioner Cotham said if there were any surveys she would like to be included.

Commissioner Powell said in the past three months, she had received several questions and concerns from seniors. She talked about how important parks and recreation are to seniors. She asked if they thought about partnering beyond UNCC. She said they were having a hard time finding instructors for senior exercise programs. Director Tanner said they have had a hard time finding locations. He said they were also trying to identify who the new partners would be who were not at the table yet. He said they were open to those opportunities.

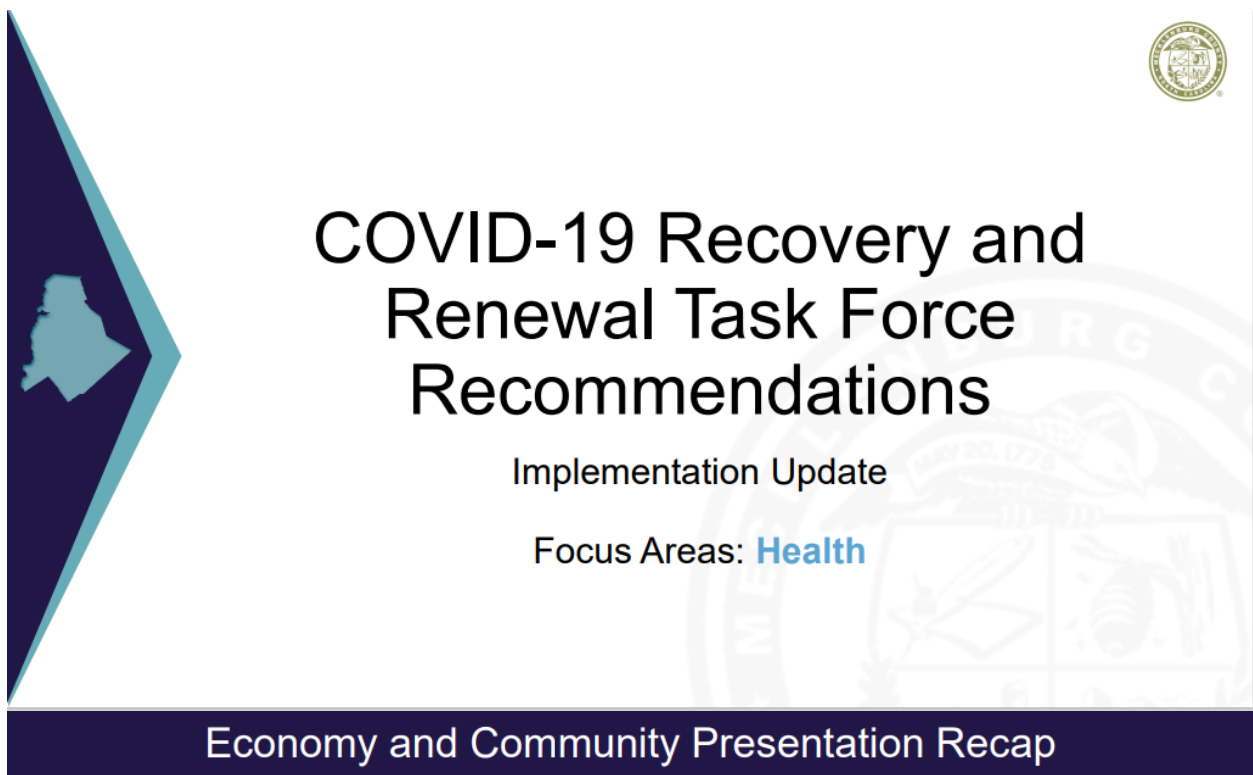
Commissioner Powell asked them to encourage people to be on the long-term care advisory boards as there was such a need in this region.

23-0173 COVID-19 RECOVERY AND RENEWAL TASK FORCE UPDATE

The Board received updates on the recovery and renewal task force implementation plan for recommendations.

Monica R. Allen, PhD, Director for Strategic Planning & Evaluation, made the presentation.

Background: In October 2020, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force to identify recommendations on the County's response to the pandemic. Over approximately a year, the Task Force developed recommendations that included three focus areas - Health, Economy, and Community - supported by 13 strategies and 60 actions. In September 2021, the BOCC approved the Task Force recommendations. Subsequent direction by the BOCC included accountability for the County Manager to determine a process for implementing and tracking progress on the actions. The presentation highlights current and recent work for the Health focus area. The Economy and Community focus areas were presented to the BOCC on February 15.



COVID-19 Recovery and
Renewal Task Force
Recommendations

Implementation Update

Focus Areas: **Health**

Economy and Community Presentation Recap

- On **Feb. 15**, Monica Allen presented updates for Task Force actions under the Economy and Community focus areas.
- The following is a breakdown of those actions:
- **18 Economy** actions
 - 14 “In progress”
 - 1 “Complete”
 - 2 “Not started”
 - 1 “No action planned by County”
- **9 Community** actions
 - 5 “In progress”
 - 4 “Complete”

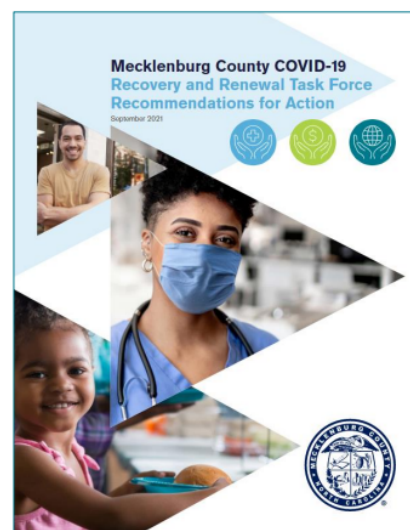
Overview

1. COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Background
2. COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan Background
3. Task Force Implementation Project Timeline
4. Implementation Status: **Health**
5. COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan Priority Areas
6. Action Implementation Details
 - **Behavioral Health & Health Equity**
7. Next Steps

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COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Background

- The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed the Recovery and Renewal Task Force in 2020.
- Task Force developed three focus areas:
 - **Health**,
 - **Economy**, and
 - **Community**.
- Thirteen strategies and 60 actions were recommended.
- The BOCC approved the Task Force recommendations in September 2021.
- Accountability for implementing these recommendations was placed within the County Manager's FY2022 and FY2023 Work Plans.
- A strategic approach was pursued to integrate and align the implementation work to the:
 - COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan
 - County Department Strategic Business Plans and annual Work Plans



[COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Recommendations for Action](#)

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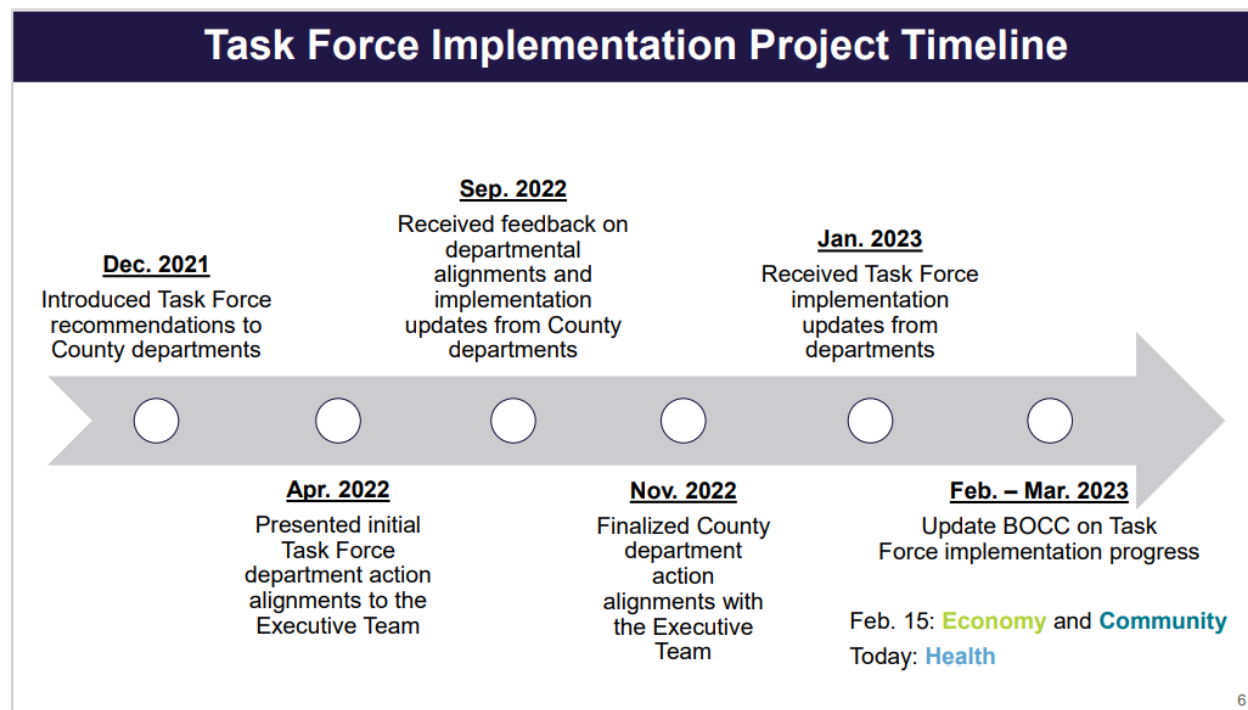
COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan Background

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mecklenburg County developed the COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan to focus the County's recovery efforts.
- The COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan was created using inputs from:
 - community conversations,
 - business roundtables,
 - public hearings,
 - internal research,
 - federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) guidance, and
 - the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force recommendations.

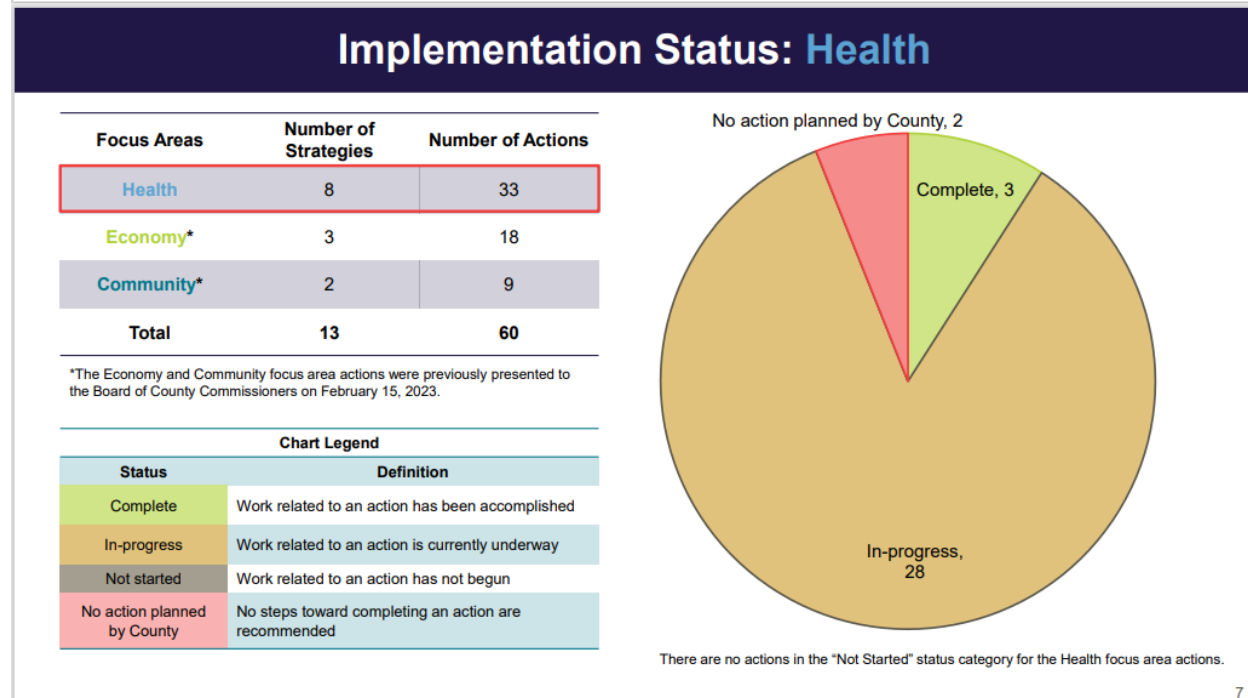


[Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan](#)

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COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan Priority Areas

The COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan consists of the following "priority areas" and goals:

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	Affordable Housing & Homelessness	Workforce & Economic Development	Parks, Environment & Infrastructure	Childcare & Early Childhood Education*
Goal 1: Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services, and programming Goal 2: Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy Goal 3: Increase food security with individuals and families	Goal 1: Reduce and prevent homelessness & housing instability	Goal 1: Increase access to training and employment opportunities to meet workforce demands of now and in the future Goal 2: Strengthen organizations by equipping them with the tools to be resilient and provide work as aligned to County programs and services	Goal 1: Enhance the land and water quality through strengthened infrastructure Goal 2: Improve the physical infrastructure for parks, amenities, and greenways	Goal 1: Increase access to affordable, quality childcare and education for children and families

*No COVID-19 Task Force actions were aligned to the Childcare & Early Childhood Education goal.

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 1 Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services and programming</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Expand and promote mental health care and substance abuse treatment options</p>	<p>Task Force Actions</p> <p>28H: Expand the County's mental health and related support services [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mecklenburg County formed a steering committee of internal and external stakeholders to develop a Behavioral Health Strategic Plan. The Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Community Support Services (CSS) Department are partnering with Alliance Health to expand access to behavioral health care. This partnership impacts actions 28H, 29H, 30H, 32H and 33H. The County is working with several community partners to plan and implement The Umbrella Center, Charlotte Mecklenburg's Family Justice Center model. CSS regularly partners with Pat's Place Advocacy Center to provide mental health services to children who have suffered abuse. In FY22, the County invested \$2 million to support the creation of a Behavioral Health Urgent Care center in partnership with the Steve Smith Family Foundation. <p>29H: Initiate a mental health communications campaign to promote awareness on how and where to get help and to help remove stigmas around seeking support [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Public Information Department (PID) and DSS partnered to relaunch MeckHope in May 2022. MeckHope is a campaign to connect residents with resources related to substance use, mental health for adults and children, housing instability, and more. Additionally, PID is available to engage on any other mental health initiatives or communications as they arise.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 1 Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services and programming</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Expand and promote mental health care and substance abuse treatment options</p>	<p>Task Force Actions</p> <p>30H: Increase mental and emotional health supports in our schools for our students, educators, and staff [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSS's Clinical and Contractual Services division (CCS) manages a contract that provides school-based behavioral health support for students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). CCS and Public Health partnered to execute a contract during Q2 of FY23 to fund several community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide behavioral health supports within CMS. The County budgeted over \$31 million to CMS in FY23 for Mental Health. CMS also has budgeted \$19.9 million in ARPA and CARES funding to address mental health in schools. <p>31H: Adopt the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Model (CCBHC) as a standard within our public health services, health clinics and providers [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center has been designated by the NC Department of Health and Human Services as a pilot in the Mecklenburg County community to test the feasibility of CCBHCs. The CCBHC model has specific criteria outlined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that are beyond the scope of standard public health operations. Mecklenburg County staff regularly meet with Anuvia to support them in this pilot program.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 1 Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services and programming</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Expand and promote mental health care and substance abuse treatment options</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>32H: Increase funding and resources for substance abuse treatment, therapy, recovery and care [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Criminal Justice Service (CJS) Supervision, Treatment, Education, and Prevention (S.T.E.P.) program aims to break the cycle of addiction that can lead to repeated law-breaking episodes. This outcome is accomplished by offering substance abuse treatment, court supervision, drug testing and other supportive services. Mecklenburg County is estimated to receive over \$57 million over the next 18 years as part of the Opioid Settlement. The County convenes the Substance Use Disorder Task Force, comprising 150 stakeholders. The County held a community meeting and public hearing in fall 2022 to gain feedback to support the development of the plan to spend the estimated funding. The seven strategies for spending the funding, as presented to the Board of County Commissioners at the January 2023 Budget Retreat, are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Intervention Naloxone Distribution Syringe Service Program Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment Recovery Housing Support Recovery Support Services Post-Overdose Response Teams

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 1 Improve behavioral health outcomes by increasing access to resources, services and programming</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Support the mental health needs of educators, school staff, childcare workers and other front-line staff dedicated to serving families with children and older adults</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>33H: Inventory access to mental health care for employees among educational, childcare, and adult care providers and devote targeted resources to fill in gaps where needed for front line workers in these sectors [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mecklenburg County's partner, Alliance Health, is currently working on the Network Adequacy and Accessibility Analysis, which is a state level report that seeks to inventory existing mental health services in North Carolina jurisdictions. The goal of the analysis is to establish provider capacity, community needs, and identify service gaps to improve access to care. In addition to the Network Adequacy and Accessibility Analysis, the County will conduct a supplemental gap analysis, focusing on service access for the uninsured and underinsured, as well as crisis and emergency services, to support the Behavioral Health Strategic Plan. MECK Pre-K continues to provide monthly reimbursement for health insurance to staff to provide access to care. Mecklenburg County's 2023 Legislative Agenda includes the action to "Support funding and policies addressing increased access to care including, primary and behavioral health, early childhood development and federally qualified health centers (FQHC)."

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Empower people, providers, and partners with health care information</p>	<p>Task Force Actions</p> <p>1H: Create and implement a comprehensive health communications and community outreach/engagement program [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mecklenburg County Public Health's (MCPH) community engagement and outreach function will be led within the department's newly formed Office of Health Equity (OHE). In FY23, MCPH is implementing several major health education and communication campaigns on various issues, including healthy food and physical activity, tobacco prevention and cessation, and COVID-19. The department has engaged a vendor to support data collection for these campaigns. <p>2H: Conduct an on-going, annual COVID-19 data collection and community survey [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY23, MCPH continued its ongoing COVID-19 data collection and reporting efforts. MCPH has also included items specific to COVID-19 on its Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, an annual survey to learn more about the community's health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and use of preventive services. The COVID-19 items on the survey cover vaccination, testing, and the duration of symptoms. The survey closed in November 2022. The final analysis recently concluded, and MCPH is integrating the results into various reports, such as the Community Health Assessment. <p>3H: Partner with healthcare providers and specialists to host public health forums [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mecklenburg County regularly convenes internal and external stakeholders across various areas to gather input and share critical information. In FY23, some example of these events include Hispanic/Latino engagement through the Access to Healthcare Forum, Carolina Violence Prevention Collaborative meetings, and Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health program events.

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Empower people, providers, and partners with health care information</p>	<p>Task Force Actions</p> <p>4H: Connect with visual art professional and students, schools, universities, organizations, and street artists to create educational content via neighborhood art [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders from the County Manager's Office, the Park and Recreation Department (PRK), MCPH, and the Arts and Sciences Council (ASC) began exploratory meetings in January of 2023 to discuss what educational art might look like and how a partnership with ASC coordinated artists could supplement the marketing and awareness of MCPH initiatives through temporary art installations. <p>5H: Partner with local faith communities, higher education institutions, libraries, athletic facilities, grassroots networks, and community organizations for outreach [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Community Resources (DCR) and PID partnered to develop communication strategies for marketing the services offered at County Community Resource Centers and to create multi-lingual marketing materials. The County also works with various community partners and service providers who engage the community with multi-lingual materials. Additionally, the newly formed Office of Health Equity in MCPH will lead the department's overall community engagement effort, including reaching out to the organizations mentioned in the Task Force action. <p>6H: Evaluate and extend the County COVID-19 Ambassadors Program as an Epidemic Prevention Ambassadors Program [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH's former COVID-19 Ambassador program focused on assessing local establishments' compliance with state and local mandates. MCPH has maintained a separate team of grant-funded health educators in the department's COVID-19 Response Unit (CRU) to provide information and access to COVID-19 resources to the community.

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Build trust through grassroots and community connections</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>7H: Identify and make more available (existing or new) a directory of grassroots and community-based organizations (CBO's) that are health care and health education advocates [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These resources exist (MedLink, Aunt Bertha), and PID and MCPH plan to partner on strategies to make them more publicly visible and educate the County's non-profit partners on their use. <p>8H: Encourage healthcare providers to partner with at least two trusted community organizations operating in marginalized communities [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCPH collaborates with the healthcare systems across a wide range of areas, including disease reporting/monitoring/response, care for pregnant and postpartum women with acute needs, and high-profile initiatives in areas such as food security, CHWs, and HIV prevention. • The County plans to reach out to the health systems to understand better how they partner with community organizations.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Build trust through grassroots and community connections</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>9H: Expand the County's community health workers program to help build relationships, understanding of needs, and awareness of resources between healthcare providers and residents in local areas and communities [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of MCPH's Community Health Worker Initiative (CHWI), the department guided the launch of two new institutions that will strengthen the ecosystem of support for community health workers (CHWs) in the County: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A stakeholder advisory collaborative (SAC) comprised of organizations that employ CHWs or are invested in CHW workforce development. (2) The Queen City Community Connect Coalition is a coalition of current or future CHWs that will support the work of the SAC and unify CHWs across the organization. <p>10H: Place health information boards/stations in popular community places and spaces [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Q1 and Q2 of FY23, MCPH used billboards and other information stations to promote public health communication campaigns regarding COVID-19, flu-like illnesses, American Heart awareness month, violence prevention, and Hispanic health-focused initiatives.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Reduce time and distance barriers separating people from their health care options</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>11H: Create or identify an existing map/directory of area clinics and health care facilities and make these locations easily available to the public [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH is currently assessing what will be required to add a webpage with a live updated directory of MedLink members and will collaborate with PID and DCR as needed. <p>12H: Outfit and deploy mobile health care clinics [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH ordered two grant-funded mobile health units to support its COVID-19 work in the community. The mobile units are anticipated to arrive in the second half of FY23. Three programs that provide health services via mobile units were funded for a total of \$2.8 million through the Community Service Grant (CSG) program and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). <p>13H: Develop and deploy a Health Transportation Service [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Social Services (DSS) Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) program provides non-emergency transportation to medical appointments or other approved destinations to eligible Mecklenburg County residents. MTS is working with a consultant and other stakeholders to assess community and program transportation needs. The consultant study has been completed, and final recommendations are pending.

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Commissioner Altman left the meeting at 4:37 p.m. and returned when noted in the minutes.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Reduce time and distance barriers separating people from their health care options</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>14H: Offer Health Tailgate events [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH staff regularly integrate into and attend existing community events to promote public health messaging and educate the public on MCPH services. In FY23, MCPH attended multiple major community events to share information about the department's services across various programs. Some of these events included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conclave Health Expo (Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated) - July 2022 Charlotte PRIDE Festival & Parade - August 2022 58th Annual Festival in the Park - September 2022 HOLA Charlotte Festival - October 2022 <p>15H: Create Medical Homes [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating Medical Homes is a primary care function that is primarily within the scope of the local health systems, not MCPH. The County plans to reach out to the health systems to understand better what work is being done related to Medical Homes.

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Reduce health care affordability barriers</p>	<p>Task Force Actions</p> <p>16H: Increase public funding for safety net providers and promote the use of community clinics, free clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH realigned approximately \$700,000 in the FY23 budget to expand contracts for safety net medical providers, including FQHCs and free and charitable clinics. In addition, the FY23 budget includes \$470,000 in new one-time funding to support the upfit of clinic space for the Katie Blessing Foundation, which will provide primary care services in East Charlotte, West Charlotte, and Southwest Charlotte. The County plans to reach out to the health systems to understand better what additional work is being done related to increasing primary care access for marginalized populations in the community. <p>17H: Expand support for sliding scale fees based on income at Mecklenburg County health care facilities [Complete]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH uses a sliding scale fee model at its facilities for relevant services. <p>18H: Advocate vigorously to expand Medicaid in North Carolina [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mecklenburg County's 2023 Legislative Agenda includes the action "Support Medicaid and operational flexibility for public assistance programs" and County staff closely monitor the status of Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina. <p>19H: Develop a comprehensive community health care affordability study [Complete]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH published the <i>Primary Care Access in Mecklenburg County</i> report in September 2022, which lays out the primary care landscape in the county and makes recommendations on ways to expand care in the face of barriers, including affordability of services.

Commissioner Altman returned to the meeting at 4:41 p.m.
Commissioner Meier Left the meeting at 4:41 p.m. and returned when noted in the minutes.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Enhance coordination of our community's health care efforts</p>	<p>Task Force Actions</p> <p>20H: Establish a digital health hub and data repository [No action planned by County]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work required to establish a digital health hub and data repository is not within the capacity of County departments to perform within the FY23-25 strategic business planning cycle. <p>21H: Review community/patient service access and use of health care resources within MedLink [Complete]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH published the <i>Primary Care Access in Mecklenburg County</i> report in September 2022. The report lays out the primary care landscape in the county, and the department reviewed data related to community/patient access to primary care as a part of that effort. <p>22H: Develop a strategy and increase public investments in resources for heightened acute and chronic care needs and management [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCPH's primary tool for directly addressing the level of funding for acute and chronic care needs in the community are the contracts it maintains with local safety net medical providers. Refer to Action 16H for MCPH's FY23 funding details. Mecklenburg County's 2023 Legislative Agenda includes the action: "Support funding and policies addressing increased access to care including primary and behavioral health, early childhood development and federally qualified health centers." The County has funded five organizations that provide acute and chronic care needs management since 2021 through CSGs and ARPA funding for a total of \$4.6 million. <p>23H: Create and empower an on-going COVID Recovery and Renewal public body [No action planned by County]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The County does not plan further engagement for this action unless the Board of County Commissioners provide further direction.

Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Prioritize cultural awareness in healthcare</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>24H: Expand the availability of and support recruiting efforts for diverse health care workers [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mecklenburg County will continue to support diverse recruiting for internal positions and plans to reach out to the health systems to understand better what work is being done to support the recruiting efforts of diverse healthcare workers throughout the community. • \$1.2 million was allocated to the Mecklenburg Emergency Medical Service Agency (Medic) through ARPA to expand the EMT Career Pathways program, which provides diverse candidates, including high school students and individuals looking for a career change, with paid EMT training to increase the interest of Mecklenburg County youth in pursuing a rewarding career with EMS. <p>25H: Require and provide resources for cultural competency training [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural competency training is a requirement that MCPH must meet and is a part of accreditation through the North Carolina Local Health Department (NCHLD) Accreditation Program. • In FY22, MCPH worked with the Charlotte Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to hold several live webinars and online modules broadly focused on cultural competency in healthcare and health literacy, particularly on COVID-19. • In FY23, MCPH received grant funds to launch a major initiative to strengthen the department's culture and the public health workforce. Developing capacity around providing cultural competency is one element of that work. Components of MCPH's FY23-25 Strategic Business Plan focus on cultural competency resources for employees. MCPH is currently in the planning and assessment phase of that work.

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Behavioral Health & Health Equity	
<p>Strategic Recovery Plan Goal: 2 Reduce health disparities through expansion of access to healthcare and health literacy</p> <p>Task Force Focus Area: Health</p> <p>Task Force Strategy: Prioritize cultural awareness in healthcare</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Task Force Actions</p> <p>26H: Include a patient service and cultural sensitivity survey in after care [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mecklenburg County plans to reach out to the health systems to collaborate on this and other Health focus area actions. • Once these actions have been socialized with the County's health system partners, the Mecklenburg County Office of Equity and Inclusion will connect with the respective Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion teams of these partners to learn more about the current aftercare survey practices. <p>27H: Develop culturally based health education modules [In progress]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Action 25H for details of cultural competency training, of which culturally based health education modules are a component.

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Commissioner Cotham

Next Steps


Invite local organizations to partner with the County on the implementation of certain Task Force actions




Continue to perform work related to these task force actions and gather relevant data



Provide bi-annual updates on progress made on Task Force actions



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COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force Recommendations

Implementation Update

Focus Areas: **Health**

Comments

Commissioner Leake thanked Dr. Allen and staff for their hard work. She asked how the information would be disseminated to the general public. Dr. Allen said County Manager Diorio asked her to reach out to the task force to get the information to them. County Manager Diorio said they appropriated \$500,000 to do marketing for all the ARPA investments to let people know about them and where they needed to go to access the various services.

Commissioner Meier asked if they communicated with task force about progress. County Manager Diorio said yes and explained the communication process.

23-0163 COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners shared information of their choosing within the guidelines as established by the Board, which included, but was not limited to, past and/or upcoming events.

Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Meier, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Kristine M. Smith, Clerk to the Board

George Dunlap, Chair