



# THE RANDOLPH RECAP

OCTOBER 4, 2021  
COMMISSIONER AGENDA SUMMARY



## AGENDA ITEMS

*Public Health Updates*  
*Sandhills Center Expands Territory*  
*DSS Legislative Changes*  
*Employee Retention*  
*Emergency Services Updates*

## PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES

Randolph County Public Health continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing citizens with regular updates, COVID diagnostic testing, COVID vaccinations, and booster doses for eligible recipients.

Forty-nine percent of eligible Randolph County citizens have received their first shot, while forty-five percent have had both doses. Public Health continues to work to ensure that citizens have full access to diagnostic testing and vaccinations.

Tara Aker, Randolph County Public Health Director, commented on the challenges her team has faced, saying “our staff has worked really hard for the past eighteen months. I couldn’t be more proud of them. They work hard every day. They are tired, but they keep coming back for more.” For COVID-related updates, please visit the Randolph County Public Health website.

## WHY THE RANDOLPH RECAP?

Critical issues facing our community and county government have never been greater as we progress in the 3rd decade of the 21st Century. The Randolph County Board of Commissioners holds regular public meetings on the first Monday of each month, beginning at 6:00 pm, in the 2nd Floor Meeting Room at the Historic Courthouse, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, N.C. At each meeting, issues impacting our county and citizens are presented and evaluated by the County Commissioners.

Randolph County government is committed to providing citizens with the opportunity to access information and obtain the latest news and public updates regarding the county and its government. The Randolph-Recap is a new addition to the Randolph County web page. It will provide monthly highlights and summaries from County Commissioner meetings. It will also highlight information on current issues facing the County Commissioners and the Departments and agencies of Randolph County government. The Randolph-Recap will serve as one of many communication outlets that will be used to update and communicate with our Randolph County citizens.

We hope the Randolph-Recap is helpful to you and would appreciate your input and comments as we move forward.



Hal Johnson  
Randolph County Manager



# THE RANDOLPH RECAP

OCTOBER 4, 2021  
COMMISSIONER AGENDA SUMMARY

## Sandhills Center Expands Territory

Sandhills Center is a Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization (LME-MCO) currently serving nine central North Carolina counties. Recently, NC DHHS approved requests on behalf of Davidson and Rockingham counties to disengage from their current LME-MCO partnerships and realign with Sandhills Center, effective December 1, 2021.

This addition has led to the need to expand the Sandhills Center Board of Directors. North Carolina State statute will allow this to happen only if each constituent county passes a resolution requesting such expansion.

On Monday, October 4, Randolph County Commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution to approve the five-seat expansion of Sandhills Center Board of Directors.

## DSS Legislative Changes

Two recently enacted session laws could significantly impact Randolph County and its Department of Social Services. Both SL 2021-132 (S693) and SL 2021 123 (S207) address the process and treatment of minors in need of mental health services.

The latter modifies the definition of neglect and allows the burden of financial responsibility to transfer to the county for the delinquent's assessment or treatment. This specific population of delinquent and undisciplined youth requires expensive placement and could cost hundreds per day.

While this legislation highlights a growing issue in our community, DSS Director Tracie Murphy believes it does not address the real root of the problem. She feels it could also compound the ongoing challenge of securing appropriate placement for youth. "It is a numbers problem. There are not enough treatments in the community. We don't have enough placements for these children."

There is also no additional funding being provided from the state to offset these costs. Commissioner Chair Darrell Frye feels this legislation creates a complicated issue that completely takes parents off the hook, calling it an unfunded mandate.

Murphy believes a more comprehensive approach to developing solutions for serving youth with mental health needs would be helpful. "There are no new treatments in the community. There are no new monies that came along with this bill, just the responsibility of having to do that work. No accompanying policy to help us navigate." The North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services also lobbied heavily to change language within the law so that the county is not solely responsible for treatment and evaluation.

Although this problem has certainly been laid at the feet of the county government, Randolph County DSS is proactively working in response to this new legislation. The department continues to focus on key partnerships that help find successful placements for youth. "We are reaching out hands and trying to swim upstream with this issue. We want to reach out to our LME-MCO's, our legislative partners, and community support to let them know that we are all working together." - Tracie Murphy.



# THE RANDOLPH RECAP

OCTOBER 4, 2021

COMMISSIONER AGENDA SUMMARY

## Employee Retention

Randolph County employees have worked tirelessly to provide critical services to citizens despite the significant impact of COVID on the workforce. Work demands are increasingly stressful for essential employees in public health, emergency services, law enforcement, social work, and additional frontline positions.

Trends show that employees face unprecedented exhaustion and stress levels, driving many to depart from county government. This mass departure of employees, accompanied by the increased need for critical services, has placed a significant burden on the remaining staff.

The county is committed to exploring retention avenues through funding allocation and plans to provide recommendations to the commissioners as they are available. "We have good staff at Randolph County. We are very fortunate to have them. They have been very dedicated throughout the coronavirus pandemic. We really appreciate the work [they have] done." said Jill Williams, HR Director for Randolph County.

## Emergency Services Updates

Randolph County Emergency Services operates nine base locations throughout the county, covering over 800 square miles. Randolph County Emergency Services Chief, Donovan Davis, reported his team has "responded to about 25,000 calls, which is already 4,500 ahead of last year. We are averaging nearly 1,500 calls a month."

These trends are consistent across North Carolina and have contributed to a statewide paramedic shortage so extensive that FEMA assistance is now active. A request for FEMA services in the form of an additional staffed ambulance was made on behalf of Randolph County, but has yet to be accommodated. Additionally, there are currently eighteen employment vacancies across the department. Employees, including supervisors, paramedics, telecommunicators, and EMTs, continue to show signs of fatigue and stress as they face increased workload and reduced staffing.

Despite this, Randolph County Emergency Services was the recipient for the seventh consecutive year of the Lifeline Gold Award. This award is based not only on resuscitations but primarily on cardiac care. "Being a rural county and having only one hospital that is not a cardiac intervention hospital to receive this award speaks volumes of our paramedics, EMTs, telecommunicators, and first responders because they all play a part in the success of that system. Our success rate averages thirty to forty percent for saves." – Donovan Davis

