

QUARTERLY REPORT

TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

July 2023



**SANDHILLS
CENTER**

Serving Anson, Davidson, Guilford,
Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore
Randolph, Richmond and Rockingham
counties in central North Carolina



LEADERSHIP



SANDHILLS CENTER

Chief Executive Officer
Victoria Whitt

Board Chair
Commissioner Harry Southerland, Hoke County

Vice Chair
Commissioner Priscilla Little-Reid, Anson County

Secretary
Commissioner Karen Watford, Davidson County

Anson County
Commissioner Priscilla Little-Reid
Commissioner Robert Mims

Montgomery County
Commissioner Mary Hassell
Sharon Reynolds

Davidson County
Commissioner Karen Watford
Trish Baker
Billy Louya

Moore County
Commissioner Nick Picerno
Matthew Rothbeind

Guilford County
Commissioner Alan Perdue
Dr. Alvin Keyes
Dr. Walter Salinger
Dr. James Summey

Randolph County
Commissioner David Allen
Mike Ayers
Ann Shaw

Harnett County
Commissioner Matt Nicol
Vacant

Richmond County
Commissioner Rick Watkins
Dr. Tommy Jarrell

Hoke County
Commissioner Harry Southerland
Jackie McLean

Rockingham County
Commissioner Mark Richardson
Keith Duncan

Lee County
Commissioner Kirk Smith
Walter Ferguson

**Provider Council
Representative**
Jan Herring, RHA Health Services

Hospital Representative
Mark Morris, Good Hope Hospital

** This roster is reflective of Sandhills Center leadership and Board of Directors service during April, May and June 2023.*

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It is my honor and privilege to serve as the new Chief Executive Officer of Sandhills Center.

I want to share my deepest appreciation to my predecessor, Victoria Whitt, who served Sandhills Center with integrity since 1980, and had been CEO since February 2010. Victoria retired on June 30, 2023, and will be greatly missed by staff, providers and the community. Victoria's storied career involved overseeing the merger of multiple counties into the region. She was an integral part of moving us from the former county-based mental health system to the verge of NC Medicaid Managed Care that involves the integration of physical and behavioral health services. Above all, Victoria's legacy will always be her strong, steady leadership.

At the conclusion of her career, Victoria was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Gov. Roy Cooper. Former Sandhills Center Board Chair Thad Ussery bestowed the honor during a community reception on June 23. The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is a prestigious award presented to individuals who have a proven record of extraordinary service to the state. Also in Victoria's honor, a fountain with a plaque bearing her name was dedicated in the lobby of Sandhills Center's new administrative office building in West End (pictured, at right).

It has been my pleasure to serve as Victoria's Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer for 11 years. She and I share a passion for helping others in their times of need while making a lasting, positive

impact on our communities. I look forward to carrying on Victoria's legacy and promise to work hard to live up to her -- and your -- expectations as CEO of Sandhills Center. I wish to thank our Board of Directors, network providers, community stakeholders, staff and the individuals and families we serve for the trust they have placed in me.

Anthony Ward

Anthony Ward,
Chief Executive Officer
Sandhills Center



***Thank you, Victoria, for 43 years
of service to Sandhills Center.
More photos on page 4.***

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Sandhills Center celebrated CEO Victoria Whitt's retirement with receptions for the community and staff on June 23. During one of the events, Victoria was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine and received accolades for her 43 years of service to the region.

Right: Victoria Whitt is presented with a plaque from George E. Reynolds Jr. of NAMI-Moore County.



Left: Thad Ussery presents Victoria Whitt with The Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Photos courtesy of
George E. Reynolds Jr.,
NAMI-Moore County



ANTHONY WARD SELECTED AS CEO OF SANDHILLS CENTER

The Sandhills Center Board of Directors selected Anthony Ward to serve as Chief Executive Officer, effective July 1, 2023, to replace the retiring Victoria Whitt.

Ward's appointment has allowed for a seamless transition of leadership as he has served as Deputy Directory/Chief Operating Officer under Whitt for 11 years. Prior to joining Sandhills Center, Ward served as Director of The Guilford Center, Guilford County's Department of Behavioral Health. His previous roles with The Guilford Center included Administrative Officer, Provider Relations Manager and Mental Health Administrator.

Ward graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He holds a Master of Social Work degree (specializing in management and community practice) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Wake Forest University.

"Anthony is an exceptional leader in the delivery of services to our communities," Whitt said upon Ward's appointment. "He is highly respected by the Board of Directors, staff, provider network, and the individuals and families who receive services."

"During the last 11 years, Anthony has been integral in the merger of Davidson, Guilford and Rockingham counties into the Sandhills Center region," Whitt added. "He has developed significant service options through his planning, assessment and improvement efforts, and he has led Sandhills Center's response to State requirements for entering the managed care environment. I am confident that Anthony will serve our region well as Sandhills Center makes the transition to managing physical and behavioral health needs under the NC Medicaid Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Tailored Plan in the future."

NETWORK



SANDHILLS CENTER ASSISTS PROVIDERS IN TIMES OF CHANGE

As we transition to a managed care service delivery model, Sandhills Center continuously evaluates the needs of our providers so that the network can be successful whenever operational and administrative changes are implemented. We are making it a priority to support our providers and contribute to their readiness and other essential communications.

The launch of NC Medicaid Direct on April 1, 2023, coincided with the start date of our new Jiva web-based provider portal application. As such, Sandhills Center's Utilization Management department hosted three virtual training sessions, each two hours in length. The Jiva training was conducted on Feb. 17 and 24, and March 9, and was later followed up with a two-hour refresher course on March 31.

The training centered on coaching providers on the use of the new Jiva system that allows providers to electronically submit prior authorization requests for physical and behavioral health services. Jiva also serves as a care planning system for Care Management and Tailored Care Management services. In addition, providers can utilize the platform to submit grievances and appeals, among other features. Topics covered during the training sessions included information about how to:

- Log in to the Jiva system
- Use the dashboard
- Submit Outpatient service requests
- Submit Inpatient service requests
- Save drafts of service requests
- Request extensions
- Check the status of service requests

Substantial time was allotted during each session so that providers could ask questions to gain further clarification and guidance. A recording of one of the training classes was later posted on the Sandhills Center website so that providers can review it for further understanding, and to make it accessible to those who were unable to attend the live virtual training events. Providers who need additional assistance after the April 1 launch date were encouraged to contact the Sandhills Center Provider Help Desk by telephone or email, or submit their questions through a ticket system on the provider portal.

We recognize the importance of giving providers relevant information in a timely manner to help them as they manage the daily health care needs of our members. This support is particularly relevant as incremental and significant changes are occurring. We believe that a strong support system helps build on our established relationship which, in turn, positively affects the treatment and care our members and communities receive.

SANDHILLS CENTER HOSTS ANNUAL PROVIDER ORIENTATION

Sandhills Center employs a variety of strategies to support our provider network, ranging from email blasts to regular training, as well as opportunities for two-way communication through quarterly Provider Forums. The Forums allow us to share updates on administrative and clinical matters, and to review significant changes in state and federal requirements. The goal of these sessions is to provide information that assists our network in achieving compliance to remain in good standing with both Sandhills Center and the State.

Each year, one of the Provider Forum events is dedicated to Provider Orientation. It is designed for agencies, hospitals, health care providers and licensed independent practitioners who have recently enrolled in the Sandhills Center provider network. Existing providers also are encouraged to attend as a refresher.

This year, the annual Provider Orientation was held on May 25. More than 200 new and established provider representatives attended. Anthony Ward, serving in his former role as Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer (now CEO), presented participants with a behavioral health update on local and State issues. Other topics covered by Sandhills Center

directors and staff included demonstrations of the Sandhills Center website and Tailored Plan preview site, as well as updates from various departments including:

- Network Operations
- Quality Management
- Population Health
- Program Integrity
- Utilization Management
- Finance/Claims
- Care Coordination
- Tailored Care Management
- Customer Services

Sandhills Center places a high value on offering timely and accurate information to providers in our network. The Forums present opportunities to communicate directly with them, keeping them up to date on requirements and contractual responsibilities. We believe this is particularly important during a time when North Carolina's public behavioral health system is experiencing significant change.

The Orientation and Forums are part of the Sandhills Center Training Plan that includes education and curriculum for professionals. We believe the Training Plan serves to support and nurture our network so that providers can offer high-quality services to our members and their families.



SERVICES

STATE DELAYS IMPLEMENTATION OF TAILORED PLANS

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) recently announced it will delay implementation of the Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Tailored Plans.

Sandhills Center is one of six Local Management Entities-Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs) in the state that are preparing to become Tailored Plans. Tailored Plan implementation was scheduled for Oct. 1, 2023, but will now take place at a later date. NCDHHS and the LME-MCOs remain committed to the implementation of the Tailored Plans, ensuring minimal disruption for roughly 160,000 eligible beneficiaries. Tailored Plans will serve people with complex behavioral health conditions, intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Their behavioral and physical health needs are often significant, requiring ongoing care from multiple providers. In February 2023, when NCDHHS made the decision to delay the Tailored Plan launch to Oct. 1, State leadership identified three key areas that needed more work to ensure a smooth transition:

- The LME-MCO provider networks and technical capability readiness needed to improve.
- The NCDHHS needed to put in place the appropriate legal tools to ensure the well-being and safety of the beneficiaries.
- The LME-MCOs needed to maintain focus on providing services for the populations they are best positioned to manage successfully.

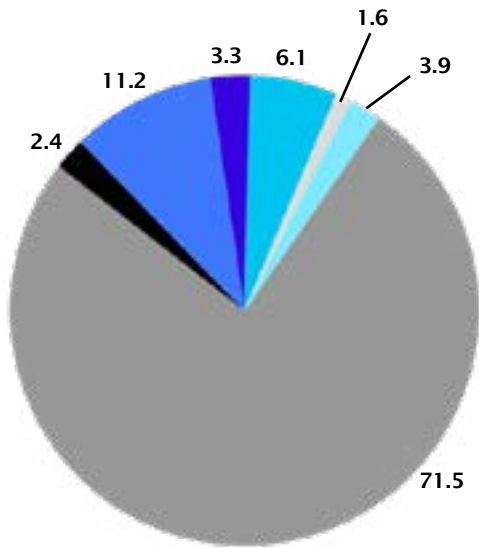
While gaps remain in provider networks, progress has been made by the LME-MCOs on technical capabilities. NCDHHS is working with the State Legislature to achieve the necessary tools to administer the Tailored Plans on par with other managed care plans, but they are still a work in progress. Further, uncertainty with the state budget, which will fund transformation costs and rebase for the Medicaid program, has created additional needs for launching Tailored Plans. Because it remains uncertain as to when those issues will be fully resolved, NCDHHS announced the delay in Tailored Plans, but is not yet ready to announce a certain go-forward date. The delay will minimize confusion for beneficiaries who were otherwise set to receive notices in mid-July, informing them of their enrollment with a Tailored Plan and directing them to select a primary care provider.

Individuals who will be covered by the Tailored Plans will continue to get behavioral health, I/DD, TBI and physical health care as they do now. The Tailored Care Management model, which launched Dec. 1, 2022, will continue to support beneficiaries by providing a care team to coordinate care across providers. Additionally, on July 1, 2023, the LME-MCOs began providing 1915(i) services to offer an array of home and community-based (HCBS) services to Medicaid beneficiaries who have serious mental health diagnoses, severe substance use disorders, I/DD and TBI. For more information, visit the:

- [NCDHHS Tailored Plan site](#)
- [NC Medicaid Provider Bulletin - 1915\(i\) services](#)

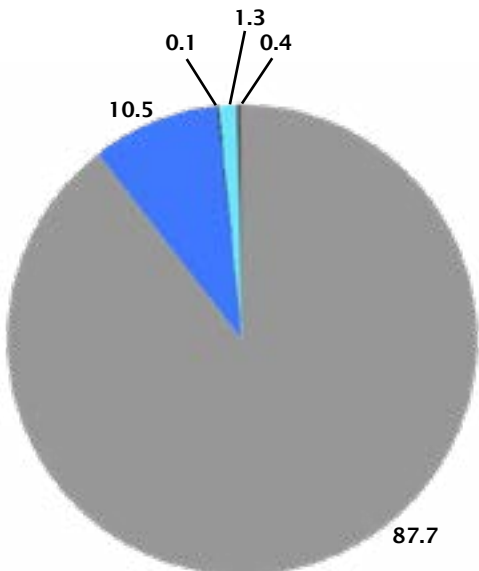
FINANCIALS

OPERATING BUDGET FY 2022-2023



REVENUES

Medicaid Service Contracts	393,752,841	71.5%
State, Federal Service Funds and Medicaid Flow	61,742,818	11.2%
County General and Other Local	13,263,679	2.4%
I/DD Treatment Planning Administration and MH/SA Treatment Planning	18,264,573	3.3%
Medicaid Administration General and LME Administration	33,758,792	6.1%
Medicaid Reserve Funds	9,086,852	1.6%
Fund Balance	21,350,512	3.9%
TOTAL	551,220,067	100%



EXPENSES

Contracts	483,405,221	87.7%
Personnel	58,037,394	10.5%
Materials and Supplies	436,787	0.1%
Current Obligations/Services	7,050,495	1.3%
Fixed Charges and Capital	2,290,170	0.4%
TOTAL	551,220,067	100%



SANDHILLS CENTER

SandhillsCenter.org

Tailored Plan preview site:
<https://TP.SandhillsCenter.org>

Administrative Office:
P.O. Box 9
West End, NC 27376

For free, confidential and anonymous behavioral health screenings, visit:
SandhillsCenterAccess2Care.org

24/7 CALL CENTER

1-800-256-2452
(TTY - 1-866-518-6778)

24/7 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE

1-833-600-2054

Sandhills Center is nationally accredited.

