



April 18, 2022

An Update on Our Progress to Evaluate and Implement Recommendations from SHaPE SC

Dear SHaPE SC Task Force members,

Thank you again for your outstanding work on the SHaPE SC Task Force. I hope this note finds you well!

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is deeply committed to working with community organizations and leaders across our state to shape a better future for the health of the people and environment of South Carolina. This includes promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

When the [Task Force to Strengthen the Health and Promote the Environment of South Carolina \(SHaPE SC\)](#) was formed last year, it was charged with evaluating and making recommendations to improve the future of health and environmental services within the state. Under the leadership of Former State Senator Larry Martin and facilitation of Bernie Hawkins, the more than 50-member group worked diligently over six months to develop **28 consensus-driven recommendations** to advance the way in which we provide health and environmental services in South Carolina. Many of these comprehensive recommendations focused on internal process improvements that DHEC could begin to take immediate action on. Meanwhile, others required coordination with external partners as well as consideration by the legislature. Moving forward, the task force’s recommendations will serve as a roadmap to help DHEC chart our path toward operational excellence.

To support the progress of these recommendations, we have identified targeted improvements in four key areas: **(1.)** salaries and workforce development, **(2.)** finances, **(3.)** services and engagement, and **(4.)** process improvement.

Salaries	Finances	Services & Engagement	Process Improvement	Stand-alone
<p>CC.3: Comp salaries</p> <p>EP.2: Analysis</p> <p>EP.4: Non-management scientists</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>CC.1: Funding</p> <p>CC.2: Budget process</p> <p>CC.3: Comp salaries</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>CC.5: Mission critical service objectives</p> <p>CC.4: Enhance partnerships</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>CC.6: Support alignment</p> <p>CC.9: Streamline processes</p> <p>PH.5: Maintain synergy</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>EP.3: Hire a Toxicologist</p> <p>PH.9: Behavioral Health Coalition</p>

	<p>CC.8: Financial reports</p> <p>EP.1: Unfunded mandates</p>	<p>CC.7: Communications with General Assembly</p> <p>BH.1: Addressing stigma with behavioral health</p> <p>BH.2: Integrate primary and behavioral health</p> <p>BH.7: Information sharing</p> <p>PH.1: Supplement with partners</p> <p>PH.3: County government</p> <p>PH.4: Interagency coordination</p>	<p>PH.6: Preserving efficiencies</p>	<p>PH.2: Communications between Public Health Regions and Central Office</p>
No DHEC Action Required				
<p>BH.3: Coordinate federal DMH and DAODAS Substance Use Disorder (SUD) funding</p> <p>BH.4: Expanding behavioral health services in jails and prison</p> <p>BH.5: Invest in DMH and SUD workforce</p> <p>BH.6: Availability of diversionary courts</p>				

As part of this effort, DHEC has currently:

- **Launched listening sessions between the director and our regional teams** to receive feedback on how we can better engage our regional teams and others in agency decision-making, including strategic planning. Sessions are ongoing.
- **Conducted a cross-agency salary analysis for mission critical positions.** This analysis was used to help determine our past two years of budget requests to better fund salaries within the agency. Also, in 2021, DHEC requested and received additional funding for salary increases for select, mission critical classifications (\$2.7M) to begin the process of addressing non-competitive salaries. In addition, the agency recently submitted a budget request seeking \$13.7M to continue addressing critical, high-turnover, and low-paid positions in the upcoming year.
- **Submitted a \$153,285,560 budget request for FY23,** prioritizing our workforce, infrastructure, and core services. This year’s request reflects our renewed focus on investments aimed at ensuring DHEC can continue to operate the environmental protection, healthcare quality, and public health services required by law and needed to ensure the current and future health and prosperity of our state and its people. This includes funding for a new state health and environmental laboratory and for several environmental programs that have been impacted by decreased federal funding in the face of emerging issues which require support. It also includes funding for 82 Full-Time Employee positions to support core program areas, mostly in the Environmental area. The request is currently being considered by the General Assembly.

- **Directed a review of our current budget processes** to support improved equitable consideration of all requests, while ensuring continued consideration of the impact of the request on the overall agency, identification of opportunities to combine efforts across deputy areas to gain greater effectiveness and efficiency, and oversight by the agency director who is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the agency. In addition, DHEC's Chief Financial Officer is currently working with our three core deputy areas to ensure our programs have the information they need to make decisions regarding the best use of funding, and a designated point-of-contact with expertise in the programs and funds assigned to that area/program.
- **Began several initiatives to improve internal agency processes**, including a review of our personnel and business processes. Specifically, providing opportunities for advancement and fair compensation for nonsupervisory experts which is very important to ensure their contributions are recognized and to help recruit and retain highly qualified experts. Our agency's Human Resources team requested a review from the Division of State Human Resources of the agency's current human resource structure and business processes. These efforts combined with an internal review and update of our agency's workforce development plan, with a renewed focus on succession planning, are aimed at supporting the recruitment and retention of expert professionals within DHEC.

In addition, recommendations pertaining to behavioral health have been shared with the South Carolina departments of Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services. DHEC will continue to work collaboratively with both agencies and support them in their efforts. This includes serving as an active member of the Behavioral Health Coalition.

As you probably know, the Senate has passed Senate Bill 2, which would significantly restructure health and environmental protection in South Carolina. We are working closely with the Legislature to provide information related to this proposal, and stand ready to implement any changes that are adopted.

I am grateful for the diverse stakeholder support of this work. I also recognize that DHEC cannot do this work alone. We rely on the ongoing commitment of our partners and communities across the state to achieve our shared vision of healthy people living in healthy communities. Thank you for your willingness to engage in this important endeavor and for your ongoing service to the people of this great state.

I look forward to our continued work together, and am committed to keeping you and the public updated as we work to address many of the opportunities for improvements outlined by SHaPE SC.

Sincerely,



Ed

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Director, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control