

**Task Force to  
Strengthen the  
Health and  
Promote the  
Environment of  
South Carolina**

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**4th Meeting of the Full-Task Force  
Oct. 19, 2021**



**SHaPE**



# Agenda

- Opening Remarks
- Overview
- Acknowledgments
- Review of Recommendations
- Next Steps
- Remaining Q&A
- Closing Remarks

# Opening Remarks

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**Larry A. Martin**  
Task Force Chair  
SHaPE SC

# Overview

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**Bernie Hawkins**

Task Force Facilitator

SHaPE SC

# SHaPE SC Task Force Overview

- SHaPE SC held its initial meeting on **June 3, 2021**
- **More than 50 diverse stakeholders from across the state**, with hundreds of years of collective experience
- **Task force participants were charged with:**
  1. Evaluating how South Carolina agencies deliver health and environmental protection services
  2. Making recommendations that might improve delivery of those services
- **Three subcommittees were formed: (1.) Behavioral Health, (2.) Environmental Protection, and (3.) Public Health**

# Goal & Objectives

- **The ultimate goal:** consensus-driven recommendations to improve delivery of quality health and environmental services in the most accessible, efficient, and effective manner
- Focus on relevant services **provided by state government**
- **Identify recommendations that could improve services by:**
  - a. Changes within the **current organizational framework**,
  - b. Modifying the **current organizational framework or structure**, and/or
  - c. Creating a **new organizational alignment** among service agencies

# Since June 3, 2021, SHaPE SC:

- Held **17 public meetings**,
  - Approximately **30 hours of discussion**
- Performed extensive research
- Interviewed current and former DHEC employees
- Reviewed organizational changes in DHEC back to 1973
- Received and reviewed public input from more than **400 individuals and stakeholder groups**
- Presented findings and recommendations from its **3 subcommittees**

***Today is the culmination of this work***

# Acknowledgments



# Final Recommendations

- Task Force Report captures **2 key types of recommendations:**
  - 1) Cross-cutting**
  - 2) Service-specific**
- As part of its findings, SHaPE SC identified:
  - **9 major cross-cutting**, and
  - **19 service-specific** recommendations

# Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- 1) Behavioral, environmental protection, and public health services **must be better funded**
- 2) DHEC should **examine and implement the budget review and request processes** to provide for greater equity between its three core deputy areas – Environmental Affairs, Healthcare Quality, and Public Health
- 3) There needs to be **sufficient and sustainable funding of competitive salaries for critical positions** to ensure South Carolina can continue to have the capacity and expertise required to deliver high-quality health and environmental services
- 4) State agencies providing relevant services **should continue to enhance public and private partnerships to strengthen access to services**

# Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- 5) Based on input from its three core deputy program areas, **DHEC must clearly and concisely define its mission critical service objectives**, including legislative priorities, on a yearly basis
- 6) **Review and appropriate alignment of support services at DHEC** are needed to maximize the provision of services within the substantive core program areas
- 7) **DHEC should provide better communication** with the Governor's Office and the General Assembly
- 8) **Financial reports must allow core-areas to better predict funds available** for carrying out yearly critical tasks
- 9) **Review and streamline various internal processes**

# Service-Specific Recommendations

## *Behavioral Health*

- 1. Addressing the stigma associated with behavioral health services** through partnering and co-locating with local, county-based public health departments
- 2. Continuing to pursue opportunities to integrate primary and behavioral healthcare services** to improve the quality and effectiveness of patient care
- 3. Removing preexisting legal roadblocks** to permit federal mental health and substance use disorder funding to be blended for improving co-occurring behavioral health services
- 4. Expanding behavioral health services in jails and prisons** across the state
- 5. Investing in workforce development** for behavioral health and substance use disorder professionals

# Service-Specific Recommendations

## *Behavioral Health*



- 6. Increasing availability of diversionary courts**, such as mental health and drug courts
- 7. Eliminating roadblocks to information sharing** by allowing easier sharing of patient information
- 8. Evaluating the use of paraprofessionals** and new innovative ways to staff behavioral health services
- 9. Continuing active participation and engagement with the Behavioral Health Coalition**

# Service-Specific Recommendations

## *Environmental Protection*

- 1. Addressing the cost of increasing unfunded federal mandates**, while maintaining the critical environmental protection services needed to keep pace with current and anticipated economic development and population growth
- 2. Conducting a cross-analysis of agency salaries** for mission critical positions
- 3. Dedicating state resources to fund the addition of an environmental toxicologist** to address regulatory risk-assessment and communication
- 4. Providing greater opportunity for advancement and fair compensation** for non-management scientists

# Service-Specific Recommendations

## *Public Health*



- 1. Hiring and appointing capable leadership and staff** with appropriate public health and environmental experience, and then supplementing through active public and private partnerships
- 2. Addressing communication gaps between DHEC Central Office and Regions**, particularly with respect to agency-level directives
- 3. Continuing to strengthen relationships with counties and local governments** to assure consistent resources across the state
- 4. Providing greater interagency coordination** in key areas to eliminate gaps in services

# Service-Specific Recommendations

## *Public Health*



- 5. Maintaining the existing mission-driven synergy** between public health and environment
- 6. Preserving efficiencies created during the COVID-19 response**, such as use of telehealth, internal rapid hiring processes, and use of Community Health Workers



# Why This Matters

- When agencies providing critical health and environmental services are insufficiently funded, staffed, and/or not operating at full efficiency, **the state as a whole suffers**
- **This can include the failure to provide critical services**
- Unmet services can have a **substantial impact on behavioral health, the environment, and public health in South Carolina**
- Unmet services can **limit the potential for economic growth**

# Group Discussion, Questions & Answers

# Next Steps

- **Final Input and Review Process for Service-Specific Recommendations:**
- Remaining substantial requests for changes/ additions to service-specific recommendations **MUST** be submitted as a proposal in writing to your subcommittee chair and clerk(s) by **Friday, Oct. 22**
  - The subcommittee chair and clerk(s) will review the changes, and send out for an electronic subcommittee vote no later than **Tuesday, Oct. 26**
  - If approved by each subcommittee **no later than October 29**, the recommendations will be included in the final report
- **A final copy of the report will be shared with subcommittee chairs by Wednesday, Nov. 3**
- **The report will be presented to the DHEC Board and shared with the Mental Health Commission on Wednesday, Nov. 10**
- **The report will then be sent to the General Assembly and Office of the Governor**



# Closing Remarks

# SHaPE



**THANK YOU!**

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## Contact Us

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