



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

2100 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

SHaPE SC Full Task Force Meeting

Oct. 19, 2021

Minutes

The Task Force to Strengthen the Health and Promote the Environment of South Carolina (SHaPE SC) held its third full task force meeting on **Oct. 19, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.** The meeting was located at Pastides Alumni Center at UofSC, with some members attending virtually via MS Teams.

The meeting was called to order by the task force facilitator, Mr. Bernie Hawkins, and the following members were in attendance:

In attendance:

Larry Martin, Chair (SHaPE SC); Bernie Hawkins, Facilitator (SHaPE SC); Edward Simmer; Tommy Lavender; Mark Binkley; Lee Pearson; Graham Adams; Laura Aldinger; Jeffery Allen; Gayle Aycock; Art Braswell; Emily Cedzo; Lee Dutton; Sara Goldsby; Alan Hancock; Elizabeth Harmon; Rebecca Haynes; Sara Hazzard; Erika Hollis; Alan Hughes; Jeff Korte; Bill Lindsey; Lillian Mood; Patricia Moore-Pastides; Brenda Murphy; Connie Munn; Mark Nix; Myra Reece; Ken Rentiers; Kenneth Rogers; Bill Stangler; Richele Taylor, Gwen Thompson; Brannon Traxler; Gerald Wilson; Lathran Woodward

Not in attendance:

Thaddeus Bell; Eric Bellamy; Jarrod M. Bruder; Susan Cohen; Anna Maria Conner; Michael Fields; Beth Franco; Samuel L. Green, Sr.; Todd Glover; Major General William Grimsley; Thornton Kirby; Clint Leach; Judge Amy McCulloch; Joseph McLamb; Jill Miller; Harold Mitchell Jr.; Seema Shrivastava-Patel; Greg Pearce, Jr.; Kacey Schmitt; Juana Slade; Gary Spires.; Anne Summer; Kim Wilkerson

Note, some members may have called in by phone, and may not be indicated in attendance as their participation was not announced or denoted.

Also, in attendance were all four Regional Health Directors from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), James Bruckner, Kandi Fredere, Taylor Lee, and Buck Wilson; DHEC's Senior Deputy for Public Health Nick Davidson, several DHEC support staff, as well as members of the public.

Item 1: Call to Order/Welcome and Task Force Overview

SHaPE SC Facilitator Bernie Hawkins welcomed members to the fourth and final meeting of the full task force and called the meeting to order. Mr. Hawkins stated that the purpose of the meeting was to go through the draft report and receive final comments from the members of the task force. He then provided a summary overview of the task force's efforts to date.

SHaPE SC first met as a task force on June 3, 2021. Task force participants consisted of more than 50 diverse stakeholders from across the state. To support the work of the task force, three service-specific subcommittees were formed – **(1.)** Behavioral Health, **(2.)** Environmental Protection, and **(3.)** Health, which since changed its name to Public Health. The subcommittees were asked to:

1. evaluate how South Carolina government agencies currently deliver health and environmental protection services, and
2. make recommendations that might improve delivery of those services for all those residing in South Carolina.

That included, as outlined within the task force charter developed by DHEC Director Edward Simmer and approved by the DHEC Board, evaluating improvements that could be made to:

1. services,
2. structure, and
3. organizational alignment.

The ultimate goal of the task force was to develop recommendations to improve the three identified areas of focus in terms of the availability of services and efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of those services for all South Carolinians. The focus of the task force was on state government.

During its evaluation process, the task force:

- Held 17 public meetings, resulting in approximately 30 hours of discussion,
- Performed extensive research,
- Reviewed organizational changes dating back to 1973, and
- Received and reviewed public input from more than 400 individuals and stakeholder groups.

Mr. Hawkins stated that today's meeting represented a culmination of that work. He then turned the floor over to SHaPE SC Chair, former state senator, Larry Martin to offer words of acknowledgment.

Item 2: Acknowledgments

Chair Martin reiterated that from day one, the task force's goal was to shape a better future for the health of the people and the environment of South Carolina. He then thanked the task force members for their dedication, expertise, and work to helping lay the strong foundation needed to achieve that goal.

Following his remark of gratitude to all the task force members, Chair Martin recognized the task force subcommittee chairs Tommy Lavender, Mark Binkley, and Dr. Lee Pearson, as well as DHEC Board Member Seema Shrivastava-Patel, and SC Mental Health Commission Chair Greg Pearce, Jr., for their outstanding leadership and service throughout the task force's evaluation process. Chair Martin also thanked Mr. Hawkins for his leadership and facilitation of the task force.

Following Chair Martin's remarks, DHEC Director Dr. Simmer provided additional words of gratitude to Chair Martin and Mr. Hawkins for their service to the task force and state and extended his thanks to the task force subcommittee chairs and members. He then presented Chair Martin and Mr. Hawkins with certificates of service which recognized their leadership on the task force. He then turned the presentation back to Mr. Hawkins.

Item 3: Review of Recommendations

Mr. Hawkins then provided an outline for how the final report of the task force was developed. He stated that the [input document](#) that was provided to each subcommittee was used to form the final format of the report. The input document provided guidance for each subcommittee's evaluation of and recommendations to changes of services, structure, and alignment.

There were two primary types of recommendations outlined within the report: **(1.)** cross-cutting and **(2.)** service-specific. Cross-cutting recommendations were those aimed at improving the delivery of health and/or environmental services that found consensus across all applicable task force subcommittees (in some instances this may have only included two subcommittees, as behavioral health may not have had a direct input on recommendations specifically related to DHEC operations). Service-specific recommendations were consensus recommendations specific to a particular subcommittee and the service area it reviewed.

Mr. Hawkins stated that for the purpose of the day's meeting, the task force would go through each grouping of recommendations. If further discussion were needed for changes to these specific recommendations, the facilitator would open the floor for discussion.

Points of discussion were limited to two minutes, with rebuttals or discussions to the contrary position being limited to approximately one minute. If major, substantive changes to the document were found, changes would need to be presented by task force members to their respective subcommittee chair. If the changes were cross-cutting, a vote by the task force would be required.

After providing an overview of the procedures to present substantive changes, **Mr. Hawkins presented the final cross-cutting recommendations.**

DAODAS Director Sara Goldsby requested that her agency be able to submit additional information to the report to support greater context for specific recommendations. Mr. Hawkins agreed to the request.

Lill Mood, a member of the Public Health Subcommittee, then raised concerns about the questions and consideration of organizational alignment, specifically related to services provided by DHEC. Particularly, she believed that there was not enough time in the process to reach consensus on the topic of alignment. An alternative approach she provided for consideration was a review of the missions of each agency and how their services fit with the mission they are charged with. She stated that she believed that this was a part of the process that was omitted.

Mr. Hawkins briefly reviewed the outline of the input document, which included questions pertaining to recommendations for changes to alignment. As part of the task force's evaluation process, the three subcommittees each submitted positions on whether they thought there should be a change in alignment:

- The **Behavioral Health Subcommittee** determined that they didn't currently believe they would want to change their alignment.
- The **Public Health Subcommittee** submitted a recommendation that it wanted to keep public health and environmental services together. However, they did not reach full consensus on this recommendation because there were groups within the subcommittee that represented a large number of members and did not find they could reasonably give a representative position on behalf of their membership concerning the particular issues of alignment.
- The **Environmental Protection Subcommittee** discussed the issue of alignment in detail, and they could not reach a full consensus on this point. There were members who felt very strongly that there shouldn't be a change in alignment and there were members who felt very strongly that there should be. This divergence in opinion was highlighted through receipt of comments from member groups or organizations within the subcommittee outlining differences in positions.

Based on the recommendations from each of the three subcommittees, it was determined that a full consensus concerning alignment did not exist across the subcommittees.

Mr. Hawkins then opened the floor to further questions of consensus related to alignment. To change the position of the task force concerning alignment as a cross-cutting recommendation (or any other topic already addressed by the subcommittees as a cross-cutting recommendation), Mr. Hawkins reminded members that any proposed change of this nature would need to be brought back to the subcommittees who would then need to recommend that change in status. .

Ms. Mood shared further concerns that through not providing a consensus cross-cutting recommendation to the Legislature concerning alignment, that the task force would in turn be saying that however services were eventually aligned that "we would do the best we can."

Following up on Ms. Mood's concerns, Mr. Hawkins stated that the report provides a number of very helpful recommendations on the improvement of services based on structural changes and changes in services that were not dependent upon changes in agency alignment. However, he agreed with Ms. Mood's point that the task force could not reach a final consensus cross-cutting recommendation on what the preferred alignment of services should be moving forward.

Richele Taylor, a member of the Public Health Subcommittee and Chief Executive Officer and Chief Legal Officer of the South Carolina Medical Association, added that there was also discussion on the question of alignment within the Public Health Subcommittee. Based on these discussions, the subcommittee determined that they did not know all of the information needed to make a really good recommendation about changes in alignment. As a result, she thought that the group had discussed some of the barriers to saying what a final result would be on this recommendation. She also shared that she represented a large association and that it would be hard for her association to say that all physicians would hold the same belief concerning any recommendations for change in alignment. In addition, she believed that there were a lot of remaining issues regarding making a recommendation on this subject at this time. She also recognized that Ms. Mood and others had voiced that alignment should not change. At the same time, there did not exist a full consensus from the entire group on this issue.

Ms. Mood then stated that she believed there was some very good substantive recommendations within the report. However, she continued to believe that there would need to be a compelling reason to “say let’s do a shuffle of state agency responsibilities.” She did not find that such a reason had been addressed by the task force or its subcommittees.

Mr. Hawkins requested that Ms. Mood work with Public Health Subcommittee Chair Dr. Lee Pearson to provide recommended revised language about the topic under discussion that could then be included in the report.

Dr. Pearson shared that the challenge for the Public Health Subcommittee was the comparing of the “known and the unknown” with respect to evaluating changes in alignment. He felt unsure that the task force was in a position to reach a complete presentation of the issue on realignment.

The task force did not raise concerns nor suggest changes to the other cross-cutting recommendations.

Following the conclusion of discussions related to alignment, the task force moved forward to discuss **service-specific recommendations**.

Item 4: Remaining Q&A

With respect to the service specific recommendations, DAODAS Director Goldsby requested clarification and revision to the third service-specific recommendation presented by the Behavioral Health Subcommittee. The recommendation read: “**Removing preexisting legal roadblocks** to permit federal mental health and substance use disorder funding to be blended for improving co-occurring behavioral health services.”

Behavioral Health Subcommittee Chair Mark Binkley clarified that the recommendation was related to the federal mental health block grant and federal substance abuse treatment block grant.

Director Goldsby then asked how the state was supposed to remove the roadblocks at the federal level. Mr. Binkley stated that the director was correct, and that it was a federal issue and not a state issue. Director Goldsby requested to change the word “blend” to “match,” “pair,” or “align.” Director Goldsby and Mr. Binkley agreed to discuss the recommend revision further.

Hearing no further questions or discussions, Mr. Hawkins moved to the next steps portion of the presentation.

No further concerns or questions were raised by the task force concerning any of the service-specific recommendations.

Item 5: Next Steps

Mr. Hawkins then reviewed next steps in the finalization of the report. This included receiving final input from subcommittee members on cross-cutting or service-specific recommendations.

Item 8: Closing Remarks

At the closure of the next steps portion of the presentation, Chair Martin offered closing remarks. In his closing remarks, he reviewed the subcommittee process and how the recommendations by the

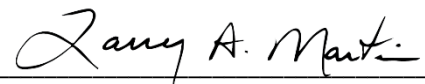
task force were determined. He then thanked the task force members for the opportunity to work with them on this effort.

DHEC Director Simmer then closed the meeting by expressing additional gratitude towards the task force for their collective work. He stated that DHEC would plan to take action on the recommendations outlined in the report, and that he understood the concerns on what DHEC, and other agencies, may look like moving forward. Director Simmer then reiterated that regardless of organizational alignment, the recommendations provided by the task force could be acted on. He also shared that he would be providing a response to the report and the recommendations outlined within it.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A recording of the 4th SHaPE SC meeting held on Oct. 19, 2021, is available [here](#).

Additional information regarding the SHaPE SC task force is available at shapesouthcarolina.gov.



Larry Martin, SHaPE SC Chair

Nov. 4, 2021