

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The services of the Department of Health and Human Services are provided by many programs which are organized within several divisions and agencies.

Division: Division of Budget, Planning and Analysis
Division of Information Resource Management
Division of Facility Services
Division of Mental Health/DD/SA Services
Division of Public Health
Division of Environmental Health
Division of Aging
Division of Social Services
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Division of Early Intervention and Education
Division of Services for the Blind
Division of Child Development
Division of Human Resources
Division of Medical Assistance

Agencies: Office of the Controller
Office of Internal Audit
Office of Economic Opportunity
Office of Communication
Office of Legal Affairs
Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Office of Research, Demonstrations, and Rural Health Development
Office of Citizen Services

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

This office, created by the Executive Organization Act of 1973, is a part of the Executive Branch of State Government. The Secretary, appointed by the Governor, serves as the principal officer of the Department and is responsible for the necessary management, development of policy, establishment of standards general health, social services and rehabilitation. Divisions and agencies within the Office of the Secretary are the Division of Human Resources, Communications Office, Legal Office of Citizen Services, Office of Intergovernmental Relations, Office of Research and Rural Health Development, and Division of Medical Assistance.

DIVISION OF AGING

The Division of Aging promotes successful aging for North Carolina's older population and their families, advancing their social, health, and economic well-being. Working closely with Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers, the Division supports the independence and dignity of impaired older persons through such home and community services as in-home aide care, congregate and home-delivered meals, transportation, adult day care, housing and home improvement, and respite for family caregivers.

The Division promotes the rights of residents of nursing homes and adult care homes through its Ombudsman Program, and uses Senior Centers as local resources for information and access to a wide range of services and programs. The Division is also committed to helping younger generations prepare to enjoy their later years. Work of the Division is informed by the views of senior advocates.

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The Division of Services for the Blind provides treatment, rehabilitation, education and independent living alternatives for blind and visually impaired residents of North Carolina. Through vocational rehabilitation, the division helps people find and keep jobs. The division also promotes the prevention of blindness through educational programs.

The Governor Morehead School, the state's residential school for the blind, operates under the division. Located in Raleigh, the school serves children from birth to age 21. The school's programs include a preschool for children from birth to age five, an academic program for youth ages five to 21, and an alternative program for youth ages five to 21 who have other disabilities in addition to blindness. An outreach program is also available to children attending public school.

DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The Division of Child Development protects the well-being of children while they are away from their parents by licensing, monitoring, and regulating child day care. More than 190,000 of North Carolina's children spend their days in regulated day care centers and homes. Children attending day care full-time beginning at age two months will spend nearly 10,000 hours in day care by the time they enter kindergarten.

Passage of Governor Hunt's Smart Start program in 1993 brought more improvements to the quality of child care for our state's youngest children, resulting in more individualized attention through smaller child/staff ratios for children under two.

The Child Development Division provides technical assistance to help child care programs accommodate children with special needs, assists home child care providers on meeting safety standards, and helps communities establish resource and referral agencies to help families find the child care they need. The division also helps low-income families pay for child care, enabling parents to go to work.

OFFICE OF CITIZEN SERVICES

One-stop shopping in the Department of Health and Human Services is available through the Office of Citizen Services, which allows citizens to travel through the maze of the human service delivery system by answering questions, cutting through red tape and serving as a clearinghouse for information relating to the services to which the people of the state are entitled.

The Office of Citizen Services' toll-free Information and Referral Service/CARE-LINE is staffed with specialists who offer information and referral on human services within the Department of Health and Human Services and non-profits across the state. The office also handles complaints and inquiries related to department services through an Ombudsman Program. A bilingual specialist is available for Spanish-speaking callers. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., except holidays.

In North Carolina, call 1-800-662-7030 (TTY/Voice/Spanish)

or 919-733-4261 (Voice)

or 919-733-4851 (TTY)

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

The state's 600,000 deaf and hard of hearing citizens can find the assistance and information they need from the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The division provides a broad range of services for children and adults, their families and the professionals who serve them. More than 770 children attend the N.C. Schools for the Deaf, and regional resource centers help families through the first difficult years of dealing with hearing loss. The division also provides interpreter services, advocacy, access to technology and coordination of human services for the deaf and hard of hearing.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The Office of Economic Opportunity helps families to achieve economic independence with incomes above the federal poverty level. Families get help in finding a job or housing or any number of services that lead to independence. The office also gives shelter to an average of 2,000 homeless individuals and families per day, helping them get shelter, food, health care, and child care. The homeless can also get psychological and substance abuse counseling.

OEO channels funds to community-based, private non-profit agencies in the form of Community Services Block Grants (CSBGs), Community Action Partnership grants, and Emergency Shelter Grants Program.

The federal-funded Community Services Block Grant Program and the state-funded Community Action Partnership Grants, both enable local communities to address the causes and conditions of poverty, helping people become self-sufficient, gain employment, and find temporary and long-term housing. Emergency Shelter Grants help communities serve homeless individuals and families.

The 36 Community Action Agencies and the other private, non-profit agencies that receive grants through OEO, generate, on average, \$10 for every \$1 provided by the Office.

DIVISION OF FACILITY SERVICES

The Division of Facility Services inspects, certifies, registers and licenses hospitals, nursing homes, adult care homes, mental health facilities, home care programs, and other health facilities. It determines the need for many such health facilities and services across the state and develops a plan to meet that need.

The division reviews health care facility designs and construction for safety and other concerns. It also oversees the effectiveness of the state's emergency medical services (EMS) system, issues permits for all ambulances in the state and certifies all local EMS personnel.

Other responsibilities include inspection and compliance enforcement and construction approval for local jails. The division also regulates charitable solicitations and bingo.

DIVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Division of Information Resource Management (DIRM) supports the Department of Health and Human Services' business and client record keeping needs. The division also provides technical services to the department and its related agencies, assuring access to department-maintained records for more than 14,000 local computer workstations across the state. In addition, DIRM processes and mails more than 17 million client documents each year.

DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The Division of Medical Assistance is chiefly responsible for administering the federal Medicaid Program. The division also manages the Community Alternatives program, which helps the elderly and disabled remain in their homes by providing needed health and personal care services. The Baby Love program helps improve women's access to early prenatal care and preventive health care for low birth weight infants. Carolina Access connects people with primary care doctors who manage their patient care needs.

Health Check is an outreach program aimed at improving the quality of health care among low-income children. The program guarantees eligible children regular comprehensive health exams that include necessary immunizations, screenings and follow-up care.

DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

North Carolinians and their families suffering from mental illness, struggling with a drug or alcohol addiction or coping with a developmental disability receive help and support from the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse.

The Division operates four regional psychiatric hospitals for those who need in-patient psychiatric services, and oversees a network of mental health programs in communities across the state. The division also responds to the special needs of children with serious emotional and behavioral disorders through three regional educational institutions. It operates a special care center for the elderly with serious medical and mental problems.

The division provides residential services at five regional mental retardation centers which provide a wide range of services to people with severe and profound mental retardation and other related disabilities. The division oversees residential and outpatient treatment at three alcohol and drug abuse treatment centers.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The Division of Public Health works to protect, promote, and preserve the health of North Carolinians through ethical, compassionate, and evidence-based public health practice. The division's wide range of programs and services are aimed toward protecting and improving the health of the people who live and work in North Carolina. Public health programs reach out to help build healthy families and communities, promote healthful living, lower the risk of disease and untimely death, and reduce the consequences of disease. The Division of Public Health also gathers and analyzes statewide health data and statistics needed for making sound public health decisions and policies.

The division works with other DHHS divisions, state agencies and local health departments and in partnership with public and private groups to ensure a healthy North Carolina.

OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The N.C. Office of Rural Health and Resource Development, founded in 1973 as the Office of Rural Health Services, provides technical assistance to small hospitals and community health centers in rural and medically under-served communities. The office also recruits health care providers to work in rural and medically under-served communities and provides grants for community health centers.

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Division of Social Services provides immediate economic and social support to individuals and families. Its principal mission is to strengthen families and to help people get jobs and move off welfare.

Work First is Governor Jim Hunt's welfare reform effort, emphasizing work and personal responsibility. Work First sets strict time limits on benefits and tough sanctions for those who refuse to participate. It helps welfare parents become wage earners through job training and help pay for child care. Its goal is to streamline and simplify the welfare system, cutting red tape.

The division supports North Carolina families in numerous other ways:

Child support enforcement ensures children receive financial support from absent parents. Foster care services link children to nurturing private homes, group homes, or child-caring institutions.

Adoption services help place children with permanent, caring families. Protective services identify youngsters who are at risk for abuse or neglect and provides help to ensure their safety and well being.

Adolescent parenting programs work to delay a second pregnancy among teenagers and has effectively cut the rate of second pregnancies in half.

Social services offices operate in every county. Local offices are operated by the individual counties under the supervision of the state division.

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The goal of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is employment. Vocational rehabilitation counselors work with business and community agencies to help them prepare their work

sites to accommodate employees who have physical or mental disabilities. The division also provides services that encourage and reinforce independent living for the disabled, through two main components: the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Independent Living Services Program.

Rehabilitation counselors in vocational rehabilitation offices across the state are available to assist people with disabilities with individualized plans to meet their unique needs. Counselors can provide vocational evaluations, job training, guidance and counseling. They help disabled people make the transition from rehabilitation to employment and educate them about the kinds of technology available that could increase independence.