

**DSS**

Continued from 1A

found failures in child services.

"In a 2015 federal review of the state's child welfare system, North Carolina failed all 14 criteria, even the basic safety of the children in the system," Cook said in an email. "The NC child welfare system also failed a state review, auditor's review, legislative review and an independent review. We have 100 counties delivering services 100 different ways."

Cook further claimed that a regional system of delivering social services would ease workloads on "overwhelmed" case managers, lead to the sharing of best practices and improve response times to crises.

Smith-Ingram, D-Northampton, said she also supported the measure as effort to improve child services, citing the same report that Cook mentioned. She said the state needs to make child services more accountable and accessible. She

declined to discuss specific issues found at local DSS offices, but said she learned of an "extreme issue" in one of the counties she represents.

In supporting the legislation, she said she wanted to ensure rural areas had a "seat at the table" in the discussions.

Local officials remain skeptical or opposed to the legislation, however. Pasquotank County Attorney Mike Cox reported to commissioners last week that the county is lobbying against the bill.

"I don't think any time you centralize government at this level, it's going to be a good thing for the county," Cox said.

Alluding to the merger of regional mental health agencies that created Trillium Health Resources, he also commented, "You create these entities like mental health and you get some big salaries and less services, and there's big concerns about that."

Pasquotank DSS Director Melissa Stokely said in an email Thursday that the

*"I don't think any time you centralize government at this level, it's going to be a good thing for the country."*

**Mike Cox**  
Pasquotank county attorney

legislation "leaves too many unanswered questions at this point."

Though not directly taking a position on the proposal, she shared a statement from the N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services in opposition to the legislation.

"Based on our experience and the experience of other states, we believe that regionalization will further fragment the system, weaken the safety net in each county, and place children and families at unnecessary risk," the statement reads.

While Perquimans County commissioners haven't taken a formal position on DSS regionalization, Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath said some do have concerns about merg-

ing DSS offices, based on how the merger of mental health agencies has gone.

"In that case we don't have control," Heath said. "I think the feeling is social services probably needs to be maintained on the county level."

Like Stokely, Chowan County DSS Director Leticia Loadholt said "there are lots of unanswered questions" about regionalizing social services — "especially in rural areas."

Currituck DSS Director Kathy Romm said while she's opposed to the legislation, she is glad it includes a working group to study the "potentially extremely complex" merger of DSS offices. It's unclear how regional entities would affect county DSS offices' federal,

state and local funding, and there are also lots of logistical and personnel questions, she said.

Romm also said that DSS offices do need to improve, and that the differences between local funding levels can have a big impact on services and retaining good employees. But she said she doesn't see how regionalization will fix anything.

"I do not see how that improves the outcome we agree with the state we need," she said.

Camden DSS Director Craig Patterson said that county DSS offices are working to improve in response to the federal review. But he also noted that "no state passes" that review. Notably, the review evaluates North Carolina as a whole, not individual county DSS offices.

Patterson also said that some counties' DSS offices provide unique services to meet special local needs. It's not clear those services would continue under a system of regional entities, he said.

Though the regionalization bill enjoys support from both of the region's senators, area House members take different positions. State Rep. Howard Hunter III, D-Hertford, opposes merging DSS offices.

"I will not support regionalization," he said in an email. "Local control is better. It's a horrible bill."

State Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, said he's heard local concerns about merging DSS offices, and all the issues that could create, such as potential loss of employment or people having to travel further for services.

However, he noted the working group is essentially a study committee, and the working group might find regionalization is a bad idea. He said he would consider regionalization, but only if it improves the vital services that are a "lifeline" for many people.

*Perquimans Weekly Editor Peter Williams and Chowan Herald Editor Miles Layton contributed to this report.*

**HOSPITALS**

Continued from 1A

emergency care for patients

who are unable to pay.

Sackrison said hospitals understand CON critics' argument that the free market should prevail and

that no business should be shielded from competition. However, nonprofit Vidant hospitals don't get to decide who their cus-

tomers are, nor can they turn away people unable to pay, he said.

Sackrison said if the CON law is repealed, some services offered by Vidant hospitals in Edenton and Windsor — MRI scans and cataract surgery — could become vulnerable. He noted that while physicians might not rush to open competing facilities near Bertie, they might open them between Edenton and Elizabeth City to pick off patients from both Vidant Chowan and Sentara Albemarle Medical Center.

Sentara Albemarle President Coleen Santa Ana said she also opposes repealing the CON law. In an email Friday, Santa Ana said the CON law helps the Elizabeth City-based hospital provide high-quality, affordable care despite some patients' inability to pay.

"Without CON new providers could enter our community without having to bear the responsibility of providing care for everyone" while leaving Sentara Albemarle with a higher percentage of uninsured or under-insured patients, Santa Ana said.

She also noted that CON "helps correct market imbalances" such as hospitals' role in public health and disaster response,

training a healthcare workforce, and accepting low reimbursements from Medicare/Medicaid patients.

Julie Henry, of the N.C. Hospital Association, said the hospital group also opposes repealing the CON law. In an interview last week, Henry said rural hospitals are already struggling. Without the guaranteed revenue from services such as outpatient care that the CON law provides, some rural hospitals could be forced to shut down, she said. Those revenues help cover services that are vital though not necessarily profitable, she said, noting freestanding emergency rooms are rare.

Henry also pointed to research by Ascendant Healthcare Advisors that disputes criticisms of North Carolina's CON law. Ascendant, a research and consulting firm based in Chapel Hill, claims that North Carolina's "net price-per-inpatient discharge is 15 percent lower than the average of all states without the law, while its cost-per-outpatient service is nearly 20 percent lower." Ascendant's research also claims North Carolina has more hospitals and outpatient surgery centers per 1,000 square miles than states without CON requirements.

Henry also said the potential repeal of the federal Affordable Care Act could cause upheaval in health care, which could make now an especially bad time to repeal CON.

"We're in a very tenuous place right now," she said, adding her hope is that the state House will not include CON's repeal in its version of the state budget.

At least one House Republican favors CON repeal, however.

State Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, said he understands the concerns of Vidant and other health care systems, but said he'd probably support CON's repeal — though his vote on the budget will also depend on other provisions.

"I'm likely going to opt on the side of free enterprise," Steinburg said of repealing CON.

He acknowledged rural hospitals already tend to operate on "very thin margins," but suggested limited unmet demand in rural areas and the repeal's delay until 2025 could minimize repeal's impacts.

Rep. Howard Hunter III, D-Hertford, who represents part of Pasquotank County, said in a brief statement Friday that he opposes repealing the CON law, based on hospitals' concerns.

**NOTICE**

**MEETING OF THE CHOWAN COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION & REVIEW**

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 105-322, the Chowan County Board of Equalization and Review will meet as required by law.

**PURPOSE OF MEETINGS:** To hear, upon request, appeals from taxpayers who own or control taxable property assessed for taxation in Chowan County regarding the valuation of such property or the property of others, and to fulfill other duties and responsibilities by law.

**TIME OF MEETINGS:** The Board will convene its first meeting on Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 at 6:00 P.M. The Board will meet again on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 6:00 P.M. with plans to adjourn for the purpose of hearing new appeals for the 2017 tax year. The meetings will be held in the Public Safety Center, 305 W. Freemason St., Edenton, NC 27932.

In the event of earlier or later adjournment, notice to that effect will be published in this newspaper.

Notice is specifically given that all appeals or requests for hearing must be received no later than Monday, Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at 6:00 P.M.

Notice is further given that dates for the hearing of appeals timely filed will be available through the office of the Tax Administrator, serving as the Clerk to the Board of Equalization and Review, and will also be provided to individuals and organizations that have requested notice pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.12.

All requests for hearing should be made to:

**Chowan County Board of Equalization and Review**

C/o Chowan County Tax Department  
P.O. Box 1030, Edenton, NC 27932  
(252) 482-8487

**FEDERAL GRANT REVIEW**

There will be a presentation in the Board of Education Building on Friday, May 19, 2017 at 10 a.m. for parents of home school students in need of Special Education Services. The presentation will address what services/materials would benefit parentally placed special education children. If interested in attending, or for questions, please contact Virginia Jones, Director of Exceptional Children's Programs at 252-482-4436.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-Part B, Public Law 108.446) is presently being amended. The Project describes the special education programs that Edenton-Chowan County Schools proposes for Federal funding for the 2017-2018 school year. Interested persons are encouraged to review amendments to the Project and make comments concerning the implementation of special education under this Federal Program. All comments will be considered prior to submission of the amended Project to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, North Carolina. The IDEA-Part B Project is open to the public for review and comments during the week of June 5-9 in the Board of Education, located at 406 West Queen St., Edenton, NC 27932. For questions, please contact Mrs. Virginia Jones, Director of Exceptional Children's Programs, at 252-482-4436 or email vjones@ecps.k12.nc.us.

**THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NOTICE**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title III requires that each local education agency submit a Title III application in order to receive federal funds. The federal funds are used to provide instructional activities and services to help English Language Learners meet high standards. A public meeting will be held May 24 at the Edenton-Chowan Schools Board of Education at 4:00 p.m. for the purpose of sharing information with the public concerning the programs and give participants an opportunity to provide input for planning and implementation. In addition, The No Child Left Behind Title III application is open to public review and for comments on May 26th in the office of Virginia Jones located at Edenton-Chowan Schools Board of Education, 406 W. Queen St., Edenton, North Carolina.

**Notificación de Participación Pública del Acto 2001 "Que Ningún Niño Se quede Atrás"**

El Acto de la Educación Primaria y Secundaria (ESEA) Título III requiere que todas las instituciones locales de educación hagan entrega de la solicitud denominada Título III para recibir fondos federales. Estos fondos se utilizan en la creación de actividades y servicios educativos, que tienen como objetivo principal, mejorar el rendimiento académico de los alumnos más desfavorecidos. El día 24 de Mayo del 2017 a las 4:00 p.m. se llevará a cabo una junta pública en la oficinas del Edenton-Chowan Board of Education con el propósito de informar a los asistentes sobre los programas y servicios que se ofrecen y al mismo tiempo solicitar su colaboración en la planeación e implementación de los mismos. De igual forma, la solicitud del Acto 2001 "Que ningún niño se quede atrás" estará a disposición del público para su revisión y comentarios del 26 de Mayo en la oficina de Virginia Jones localizada en las oficinas del Edenton-Chowan Schools Board of Education, ubicadas en 406 W. Queen St., Edenton, North Carolina.

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**MEMORIAL DAY**

**TOWN OF EDENTON  
GARBAGE COLLECTION  
MEMORIAL DAY 2017**

MONDAY	MAY 29 <sup>TH</sup>	Holiday
TUESDAY	MAY 30 <sup>TH</sup>	Eastside Solid Waste Collection will be picked up
WEDNESDAY	MAY 31 <sup>ST</sup>	Recyclables will be picked up
THURSDAY	JUNE 1 <sup>ST</sup>	Yard Waste will be picked up Westside Solid Waste Collection will be picked up
FRIDAY	JUNE 2 <sup>ND</sup>	Westside Solid Waste Collection will be picked up

**CHOWAN HERALD**

(USPS 106-380) Vol. 82, No. 21

Published Every Wednesday  
Cooke Communications North Carolina, LLC  
Entered as a second-class matter August 30, 1934 at the Post Office of Edenton, North Carolina, under Act of March 3, 1879.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

**Daily Advance home delivery area \$27\***  
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The Chowan Herald • P.O. Box 207 • Edenton, NC 27932  
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