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HYDE COUNTY OFFICIAL ATTENDS STATEWIDE EVENT

Hyde County Commissioner Chairman Earl Pugh, Jr., County Manager Bill Rich, Laurie Potter DSS Director and Linda McCabe FNS Supervisor attended the May 3-4 Economic Services Convening sponsored by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners in Raleigh. The two-day event brought together federal, state and local officials to discuss ways that counties can improve providing much-needed economic services to citizens.

Hyde County Manager Bill Rich said "it was very interesting and educational for Chairman Pugh and I, as we both were enlightened by the many challenges DSS share state wide and the similarity of these challenges. It was also rewarding to learn that Hyde is one of the top Counties in North Carolina regarding the percentile of completion as it relates to implementation of Medicaid and the Food stamp programs through N.C. Fast. We are very proud of the accomplishments of Laurie Potter and Linda McCabe and all who helped to make this happen in our Hyde County DSS."

Officials from the Food and Nutrition Service Agency within the United States Department of Agriculture announced on the final day of the event that North Carolina was one of three states chosen for the next round of training through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Process Improvement Collaborative.

"Since the state was already working on their application processing timeliness, we thought North Carolina would be a good candidate for the program," said Peggy Fouts, SNAP Director with the USDA's Southeast Region.

For the past year, the NCACC has worked with county DSS directors and officials from NCDHHS to help improve the statewide application processing rate for SNAP (food stamps). NCDHHS received a warning letter from USDA in 2015 that said the state could lose more than \$80 million per year in federal funding - most of which goes to county DSS agencies - if the state did not drastically improve its application processing and meet the federal 95% standard by July 1, 2016.

The NCACC sponsored regular webinars with NCDHHS officials and county managers and DSS Directors, and organized a February meeting with USDA Administrator Audrey Rowe in Washington, D.C., to discuss steps the state and counties were taking.

The Collaborative is funded by USDA and is designed to reduce the number of days agencies need to make eligibility determinations on initial applications and recertifications and to increase processing timeliness so that states will maintain a timeliness rate of 95 percent.

More than 100 county staff, including commissioners, managers and DSS Directors, attended the event. Speakers from the states of Wisconsin and Tennessee spoke about steps their departments had taken to improve processing, and several county DSS Directors from throughout North Carolina shared best practices and ideas during panel discussions.

Note: The NCACC has posted print quality photos from the event on its website at ncacc.smugmug.com/FNS-Workshop/. Please credit Photo courtesy Chris Baucom/NCACC.

***About the NCACC:** The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) is the official voice of all 100 counties on issues being considered by the General Assembly, Congress and federal and state agencies. The Association provides expertise to counties in the areas of advocacy, research, risk management and education and leadership training.*