Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM

Partners Board of Directors met by a virtual Zoom/conference call for its regular monthly meeting.

Board Member Attendance

Commissioner Designee Justin Amos	P	Commissioner Melissa Hiatt	P
DSS Director Trish Baker	A	CFAC Chair – Janet McDaniel	P
Commissioner Barbara Beatty	P	David O'Connor - *Treasurer*	P
Commissioner Tony Berry	A	Commissioner Designee Vanessa Palmer	A
Commissioner Jeffrey Brittain	A	Commissioner Terry Renegar	P
Commissioner Bert Connolly	P	Patty Schaeffer	P
Paula Atkins (non-voting)	P	Commissioner David Williams – *Vice Chair*	P
Commissioner Scott Efird	A	Commissioner Designee Paula Yost	P
Mark Fuhrmann	P	Commissioner Frank Zachary	P
Commissioner Designee Hunter Haynes	P	Commissioner Gray Wilson	P

Partners Staff Present

Libby McCraw, CEO
Rachel Porter, Deputy CEO
Andrew Walsh, Chief Legal Officer & General Council
Selenna Moss, Chief Performance & Compliance Officer
Paula Malin, Clerk to the Board

Guests

Yvonne French
Sarah Potter

I. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was confirmed, David Williams, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He stated for the record that Partners Board of Directors meetings with certain exceptions are open to the public. It is at the pleasure and convenience of the board that meetings are conducted using Zoom. Instructions to join the meeting are posted on the public website. He welcomed Partners staff, CFAC members and guests in attendance.

A special welcome was extended to Paula Atkins, Provider Council representative, attending her first meeting.

A mention of former member of the Board of Directors, Steve Garrison, is retiring February 3, 2026, with approximately thirty-eight years of public and private sector local government experience with almost eleven of these years serving as the County Manager for Rutherford County.

II. AGENDA REVISIONS

Mr. Williams asked if any members of the board had changes to the agenda. There were no changes. Mr. Williams invited a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. David O'Connor made the motion and Melissa Hiatt seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion carried.

III. CITIZEN RECOGNITION

There were no citizens registered for public comment.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The November 20, 2025, draft meeting minutes were included in the meeting agenda packet for review in advance of the meeting. Mr. Williams invited a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Frank Zachary made the motion and Janet McDaniel seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion carried.

V. REPORTS

1. **Finance Committee Report** – David O'Connor, stated that following the presentation of all action items on the Finance Committee Report, there will be one motion from the Finance Committee for approval. All action items have been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee and are now presented for the board's approval.
2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – The November 13, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes were included in the board meeting agenda packet for review in advance of the meeting.
3. Approval of November 2025 Financial Statements – The financial statements were included in the board meeting agenda packet for review in advance of the meeting.

From the Finance Committee comes a motion that Partners Board of Directors approve the November 13, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes and the November 2025 Financial Statements as presented. Coming from a Committee, no second is required. All voted and the financial statements were approved unanimously.

4. **Consumer and Family Advisory Committee Report** – Janet McDaniel provided the following report:

Accessibility Concern

- CFAC requests clear guidance on how members who require notetaking as a disability accommodation can be supported due to AI based notetaking tool restrictions from Partners.

Human Rights Committee (HRC) Update

- HRC will attend CFAC quarterly.
- Restrictive interventions have declined, behavioral incidents increased and late reporting from providers decreased.

Utilization Management Presentation – Partners Staff - Charity Bridges & Andrea Soltau

- The process for approvals was explained along with percentages of approvals/denials.

State & Committee Updates

- NC received $2+ million for the Rural Health Initiative.
- Ombudsman program moved under Health Benefits/Medicaid; no longer contracted with Legal Aid.
- GreatDay Rewards Program continues under Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) review.

County Commissioner Reports

- **Commissioners often do not provide updates during BOD meetings.**
  - CFAC will form a subcommittee to recommend a short list of report items based on Commissioners' statutory responsibilities related to county participation in the LME/MCO system, For example, Coordinating on statutory public safety and health duties (Involuntary commitment (IVC), Crisis response, Jail diversion, Child welfare and DSS coordination, Public health emergencies)
- **Board Composition Concern**
  - A CFAC member reported Yadkin County is limited to one Board seat, which would prevent any CFAC member from Yadkin from serving.
  - CFAC continues to request that a CFAC member serve in the TBI-designated seat.

    Libby McCraw, Partners CEO, noted that she will provide Ms. McDaniel with a composition of the board. She will also take back to the Partners team the request for accommodations of AI note taking without restrictions.

S2L Reporting Form

- The new S2L form is significantly more complex and was designed without collaboration from the local CFACs.
- In the other three LME/MCO regions, administrative assistants complete the current form, not CFAC members.
- Partners CFAC is the only region where a CFAC member completes it with administrative support, making the new version especially burdensome.
- Chair Janet McDaniel met with the S2L Chair and submitted follow-up recommendations emphasizing the need to simplify the form.

Gaps in Services

- Reentry: Difficulty accessing prisons to support individuals preparing for release.
- Treatment in Incarceration: Limited access to treatment; public defenders often unresponsive despite releases.
- Homelessness: Long waitlists, insufficient housing funds, lack of vouchers, and barriers for SSI recipients.

Respite:

- Families need more respite options. The ReLees Center has limited beds and is used primarily for crisis due to regional shortages.

The next regular CFAC meeting will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 6:00 PM via Zoom. Questions and concerns were invited and there were none.

5. **Provider Council Report** Paula Atkins provided the following report:
   The Provider Council met on November 21, 2025.
   IDD Subcommittee:
   - Discussion on 1915i authorization expiration vs assessment expiration and UAFL reviews changing from desktop to live virtual reviews.

   Inclusion Coalition:
   - Discussion on data from 2024 to 2025 and noted downward trend in follow up rates after hospitalizations and emergency department visits.

   Workforce Development Subcommittee:
   - Discussion of implications of the rate cuts and the potential flexibilities and opportunities to help offset the rate cuts such as:
     - value-based contracting opportunities
     - flexible scheduling
     - new credentialing rules

   Provider concerns that were noted:
   - Concerns in the meeting were about the rate decreases and the implementation of the recoupments.
     - Announcement of new council chairs: Paula Atkins - Chair, Kristen White- Vice Chair, Mike Puckett - Secretary.
     - Further discussion on the potential rate cuts and recoupments and reviewed priority information from the Partners Bulletins. Discussion on smoother process for 1915i services and standardization across the Tailored Plans.

The next Provider Council Meeting is scheduled on January 23, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

6. **CEO Report – Libby McCraw**
   Ms. McCraw provided updates that included rate cut reversal and implementation, GLP-1 (obesity drug) coverage reinstated: Child & Family Specialty Plan (CFSP) launch; Tailored Plan contract amendment uncertainty, community engagement, SAMHSA grant termination and reversal.

- The State reversed its previously announced provider rate cuts. Partners received updated free schedules, January 5, 2026, and are reprocessing affected claims automatically where possible; some exceptions may require provider action.
- The State also reinstated coverage for GLP-1 drugs; clinical staff are managing safe restarts for affected members.
- Child & Family Specialty Plan launched December 1. Of 6,000 members auto assigned 70 have opted back into Partners' Tailor Plan. Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) is managing CFSP members. BCBS receives higher rates and lacks some flexible funds Partners uses. Partners are providing services to some members without final confirmation of reimbursement rate (Department expects to provide rates by end of February). Concerns raised about adverse selection (high-risk members returning to Partners).
- Partners expected a two-year extension to the tailored plan contract (previously communicated verbally/PowerPoint), but the proposed amendment does not reflect the extension; department unable to confirm procurement/recontracting details yet. Partners are

pursuing clarification – loss of the two-year extension would materially affect planned initiatives.

- CEO, Libby McCraw, is conducting county visits (completed Cleveland and Burke; all counties to be visited by the end of March/early April. She is also participating in local events (e.g., Gaston County PIT count).
- SAMSHA grant termination notices were issued late on a Monday and targeted grants (including Workforce & Recovery grant across five counties) were temporarily listed as terminated; those termination decisions were later rescinded. The episode created uncertainty and will be monitored.

Summary: Major state reversals (rate cuts, GLP-1 reinstatement) are being operationalized, CFSP rollout is in early stages with some concerning trends (adverse selection, pending rate confirmations); tailored plan contract term remains unresolved and requires follow-up; SAMHSA grant uncertainty was resolved but merits monitoring.

Mr. Williams invited questions for Ms. McCraw and no questions were posed.

VI . DISCUSSION AGENDA – David Williams

A. Resignation of Board Chair – Approval of Board for Transition to New Chair and Any Other Officer Vacancy– **David Williams**

Former Chair Steve Eaton resigned due to relocation outside the service area. Vice Chair (David Williams) offered to serve as chair and was nominated and elected to complete the term ending June 30, 20266. The vice-chair position is now vacant, bylaws permit filling the vacancy at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

David Williams invited a motion to approve Transition of New Chair as presented. Motion made by Frank Zachary, seconded by David O'Connor, and motion carried. The vice chair vacancy will be added to the next regular meeting agenda.

B. <u>County Commissioner Advisory Committee Updates</u>

1. Burke – In the absence of, Commissioner Jeff Brittain no report given.
2. Cabarrus – Commissioner Designee Paula Yost, Cabarrus is opening a mental health center in June.
3. Catawba – Commissioner Barbara Beatty had no updates to report.
4. Cleveland – In the absence of, Commissioner Tony Berry no report given.
5. Davidson – In the absence of, County DSS Director Trish Baker, no report was given.
6. Davie – Commissioner Terry Renegar had no updates to report.
7. Forsyth – Commissioner Gray Wilson, coordinating monthly health fairs with city and transit authority. Noted Steve Garrison is retiring in February.
8. Gaston – Commissioner Designee Justin Amos had no updates to report.
9. Iredell – Commissioner Bert Connolly had no updates to report.
10. Lincoln – Commissioner Designee Vanessa Palmer had no updates to report.
11. Rutherford – Commissioner Designee Hunter Haynes, had no update to report.
12. Stanly – In the absence of Commissioner Scott Efird, no report was given.
13. Surry – Commissioner Melissa Hiatt, had no updates to report.
14. Union – Commissioner David Williams had no updates to report.
15. Yadkin – Commissioner Frank Zachary, Yadkin exploring relocation of Denmark Services to a former hospital.

C. Approval of Policies & Procedures for Board Approval – Drew Walsh

The level of review Q2 Policies and Procedures were included in the agenda packet and the policies and procedures were uploaded to ShareFile for the board's review on January 12, 2026. About 79 policies were reviewed. 10 had significant changes. Significant changes touched program integrity, IDD care coordination, mental health and substance use care coordination and external tailored care management. David Williams invited a motion to approve the Partners Q2 Policies and Procedures as presented.

Motion was made by Bert Connolly and seconded by David O'Connor. Board approval carried.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

The November 2025, Executive Dashboard was included in the meeting packet for informational purposes. David Williams invited any questions and there were none.

VII. ADJOURNMENT David Williams stated that all items on the meeting agenda had been addressed. He invited any additional items for discussion and there were none. He invited a motion to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. Frank Zachary made the motion and Bert Connolly seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled on January 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Recorded by Paula Malin, Board Clerk.