



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 3/7/2023

Good News

Department: Health & Human Services (HHS)

Presenter: Stoney Blevins, HHS Director **Contact:** Rebecca Smith & Stoney Blevins

Subject: START Program Success and Certification

Brief Summary: In response to increasing impacts of the Opioid Epidemic back in 2016 and a rising number of children in the local foster care system, Buncombe County sought out a new way to assist families experiencing co-occurring parental substance use and child maltreatment. In 2017, Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) was implemented in Buncombe County. START is a child welfare service delivery model shown to improve outcomes for children and families affected by parental substance use and child maltreatment. Since its implementation, 155 children have been served through this program, 67% of closed cases had at least one caretaker reach recovery goals, and 72% of closed cases had a child reunified with at least one parent or were never removed from the parent. While START is active in multiple states and federally recognized tribal nations, Buncombe County is leading the way in North Carolina as the only certified START site. This year, Buncombe County became one of only a handful of fully certified START jurisdictions in the country and the second START site in the country to go through the certification process.

Congratulations to the Supervisors, Social Workers, and Family Mentors who make up the Buncombe County HHS START Team on this very notable achievement.