

# ***2021-2023 Strategic Plan***

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**Intent:**

Long-term sustainability as an organization and our competitive position within the marketplace in our areas of operation involve the development and deployment of effective organization wide strategies. A meaningful and effective strategic plan promotes quality services and customer delight, organizational agility, and organizational learning. Strategic planning is part of the organization's approach to performance improvement, and is reviewed annually to monitor successes and opportunities, and updated as necessary.

**Mission Statement:**

Since 2003, Unique Caring has been a premier behavioral health agency in North Carolina. We continue to strive to be the premiere provider agency in the in the geographical area that we serve. This continues to be achieved through consistent application of our policies and procedures, respect for and courtesy toward all persons served, staff members, and contract providers. Our commitment is to achieving positive outcomes for all persons served. Staff members and providers utilize their individual training and skills in a collaborative manner with others to deliver excellent care for persons served in an efficient and caring manner. Each staff member and contractor are committed to on-going improvements in the quality of services provided an outcomes driven.

Unique Caring staff and management will consider all input from stakeholders to evaluate expanded services for the persons served. This will include monitoring local drug usage data, neighborhood trends for drug activities, and any other sources of epidemiological and community demographics.

**Values:**

Successful Specialized Foster Care and Employment Services requires quality care based on unified commitment, trust, optimism, understanding, and caring. We recognize that qualified professional service is essential for successful progress and/or towards possible reunification, adoption, and discharge from treatment. It is our goal to provide an environment in which all staff and providers believe in, support, and apply these values in the daily activities of Unique Caring, and in which clients have a sense of support, encouragement, and active participation in their treatment.

Employees and providers foster working relationships and establish working agreements with supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates based on the corporate mission statement and understood core values, which are based on respect for individual distinctions of age, color, culture, disability (including chemical dependency), ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.

*Strengths:* The leadership team has a proven commitment to effective and affordable foster care/group home services. In our search for operations staff, the level of commitment and dedication found in former operations centers will be the guide for retention of new staff and providers. Strengths that shall further develop and operate Unique Caring are found in the dedication of the selected Program Directors and

Qualified Professionals. Expectations for the Program Directors are high and attainable based upon experience.

*Weaknesses:* It is realized that not all direct service personnel are highly skilled, or receive good benefits coupled with the social stigmas regarding clients in foster care and AFL homes are challenging and difficult to manage, compounds the ability to hire and or retain good staff and providers.

*Opportunities:* With the development and implementation of strong leadership, and strong community outreach and collaboration, Unique Caring fills a need within the community.

### **Expectations of Persons Served and Other Stakeholders:**

Unique Caring provides the community with a Children & Youth program that consistently meets and exceeds the expectations of the persons served, stakeholders and the community. This vision is accomplished by development of a professional and structured setting in well-maintained businesses and neighborhoods. To meet this vision, the following components of a business plan are developed and monitored:

Unique Caring is certified as a Children & Youth Services provider with the state of North Carolina, and CARF International. These certifications and licenses are critical to our success and every action is taken to maintain, in good standing our relationships with these regulatory agencies.

*Staffing:* Unique Caring is represented by a Program Director, full-time counselors, and foster parents. As the client population grows, additional staff will be added to achieve company performance indicators and to comply with state client ratios.

*Persons Served Satisfaction:* Persons served shall have the right to submit comments, complaints and suggestions for improved performance, or support of service activities. They also have the right to express concerns and file written grievances. There shall be a client suggestion box available to all clients within the waiting room or lobby of the facility that has the necessary *Comment, Suggestion or Complaint* form available. These comments, suggestions or complaints are reviewed as received, and shared with senior management. An action plan is then developed to respond to any complaints or comments about service problems. All this information shall be considered in the quarterly reports, shared with senior management, and maybe used to guide improvements in services offered.

*Grievance Policies:* An active grievance policy is in place and publicly posted. This grievance policy is open to all clients and other stakeholders, and has a very definite handling process that is outlined in the policy manual and Client Handbook. Client grievances are shared with senior management. All grievances are reviewed quarterly and annually, and procedures are reviewed to determine if changes are necessary.

*Feedback:* On regular intervals we collect information from our clients, staff and other stakeholders. Also, we constantly seek for and received feedback form community

resources. This feedback will be reviewed and used to facilitate further program enhancement, guide program changes and continue in our efforts to be the premiere provider of Children & Youth services in the region.

### *Stakeholders*

Program Directors shall maintain regular communication with the stakeholders to determine reciprocal referral services, offer and solicit staff educational development opportunities and to function as a community resource. Stakeholders can range from simple referral resources, social service or juvenile justice providers, educational institutions or any interested individual(s). Minimum stakeholder contacts shall be outlined in the community outreach plan.

All information received from stakeholders and persons served will be used to guide ongoing development of the organization and to improve and enhance service delivery. Results of these stakeholder surveys will also be reflected back to the community via marketing efforts and presentations to referral sources and other interested stakeholders.

### **Competitive Environment:**

Unique Caring is in an area that is served by other children & youth programs, both public and private. Relationships are established with those other programs to work as a team in the area, and to provide services to clients served in the event of an emergency at other facilities (disaster closures, etc...)

Unique Caring has a proactive approach to ensuring we maintain the highest standards and provide services that are well within the federal/state rules. Our focus is the clients. As client's incentives, the facility will also offer additional services for the clients, such as outings, holiday buffets, acknowledgment of birthdays, and other client services beyond simple foster care/group home services.

*Marketing:* Community Outreach is critical to the growth and corporate citizenship of the facility. This plan will focus on stakeholders who would be appropriate reciprocal referral resources, other sources for client referral, and overall community acceptance of the organization and increased understanding of foster care services and community benefits.

### **Financial Opportunities / Threats:**

Unique Caring is a non-profit organization. It is financially supported by the resources of the facility, corporate entity, and other grantors/ financial arrangements. The primary financial support comes from client placement(s) fee payments. The facility does not receive private insurance payments. We will, however, assist clients in seeking insurance reimbursements when requested.

Unique Caring is also impacted by changes in state or federal funding, or Medicaid variations.

Financial threats are identified in low client satisfaction, low placements or risk / loss exposures at Unique Caring . To manage these threats, the center has a proactive client satisfaction agenda, which is monitored by a combination of annual satisfaction surveys, a formal grievance program, and availability of client suggestion boxes in the lobby and waiting areas.

Financial threats due to risks associated with liability claims are managed through insurance contracts and a pro-active risk management plan.

*Budget:* The leadership prepares an annual operating budget. That budget is monitored from leadership and a certified public accountant. Review of the budget determines if finances are within acceptable limits. With growth of Unique Caring , it is anticipated that the financial activity will improve and Unique Caring will be profitable. **Challenging economic times compounded by the ongoing Pandemic has a potential for affecting the organization's budget. Strong fiscal controls and financial practices proposes to minimize these as much as possible.**

### **Organization Capabilities:**

Unique Caring is staffed only by qualified personnel, who are dedicated to the practice of high quality client services. Every effort is made to groom staff for increasing responsibilities, and management will identify those who may be potential lead counselors, or other supervisory positions.

When opportunities for advancement arise, all staff is advised of those opportunities prior to seeking external candidates. If internal applicants are to be considered, management will conduct a thorough evaluation of the employee's progress, as documents in annual performance reviews and clinical supervision notes.

### **Service Area Demographics and Needs:**

The counties surrounding Unique Caring have had a well demonstrated problem with the illicit use of drugs, within families resulting in the increased removal of youth from their homes and a request for placement(s) to the communities. Our clients consist of a high number of blue and gray collar workers home base, and some white collar workers. Clients do come from all of these groups including the unemployed and disabled. Success of the program and service to the community is measured through various performance indicators.

### **Performance Indicators**

Client progress in treatment requires movement in directions that support acceptable behaviors, and drug-free lifestyles changes. Key indicators of that progress are found in compliance with counseling requirements, freedom from illicit drug(s) use, and home privileges. Other performance indicators for success in placement are found in clients improved academic and social behavior and avoidance of legal difficulties.

The mission of Unique Caring is to provide top quality placement and to be the premiere provider of children & youth foster care services in its geographic area. To achieve this goal there must be a consistent application of policies and procedures, respect for and courtesy toward all clients and staff members, and commitment to achieving positive outcomes for all clients. In meeting this mission, certain goals are established and re-evaluated on an annual basis to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided

Program growth and development is also dependent upon meeting performance indicators, which is reviewed annually. Performance indicators, gathers from persons served and outside stakeholders further assess the effectiveness and efficiency of program services.

Patient data is collected at several intervals throughout treatment. Some *access and efficiency* data measures include:

- Intake / Admissions;
- Waiting times;
- Accessibility of the facility and staff;
- Individual counseling sessions;
- Treatment planning;
- Phase advancements;
- Employment status
- Annual physical assessment and updates;
- Client annual reorientation;
- Monthly quality file reviews;
- Any activity that obtains patient information or tracks progress, including client discharge and follow up activities.

Through treatment planning, additional client data that is indicative of *effectiveness and satisfaction* performance indicators include:

- Improvement of physical and mental health;
- Improvement in job or school performance;
- Increase in self-esteem;
- Decreased anger and social problems;
- Decreased reports of family difficulties;
- Any patient behavior that indicates progress or need for intervention(s);
- Clients and staff satisfaction survey feedback;
- Positive comments and complements received from clients and other stakeholders;
- Client referrals of friends and others to the facility for services;
- Client transfer to the facility from other programs due to the level of services provided.

Program performance indicators can be found in:

- Client satisfaction surveys;
- Client retention levels;

- Time between initial contact and admission;
- Stakeholder satisfaction surveys and feedback;
- Regulatory and licensing inspections;
- Financial performance;
- Risk management control;
- Human resource management;
- Any activity that is an assessment of the overall program performance.

Performance indicators are used to identify issues and trends in placement, opportunities for increased business opportunities, and to provide improved treatment for all persons served and stakeholders. Performance indicators also evaluate the effectiveness of services, efficiency of services, and service accessibility. Through our Quality Improvement Plan, performance indicators are measured and monitored, and processed on a regular basis.

Specific treatment performance indicators tracked include:

- Clients age, race and sex demographics;
- Incoming client referral sources;
- Patient health considerations (HIV/AIDS, TB, Hep.C, STD's)  
Counseling requirements compliance;
- Improved academics and social behaviors

Effectiveness and efficiency indicators are measurable, and certain staff is responsible for achieving those measures. The following table assigns the indicators, measurement goal, and responsible staff.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Responsible staff</b>
Time from contact to admission	Under 5 days	Program Director
Client Retention	80%	All staff
Admissions		Program Director
No illicit drug use	90% within first 3 months	Counseling
Socially acceptable and academic behavior*	85% after first year	Counseling
No Juvenile arrests or illegal activities	85% after first year	Counseling
Client satisfaction	80% overall satisfaction	Program Director
Stakeholder satisfaction	90% overall satisfaction	Program Director
Referrals to <b>Unique Caring</b> from other providers		Program Director

Grievances / Complaints	Less than 8 annually	Program Director and Counseling
Compliance with medical referrals	90% follow through	Counseling staff
Health & Safety Drills	Monthly	Program Director

\*Employed, full-time student, homemaker with verifiable income, or disabled.

All indicators listed in this section are to be included in the annual performance evaluation of the Center’s activities. The data will be analyzed for meeting established performance goals, and in developing subsequent strategic planning reports.

**Evaluation**

Financial: Client census, revenues and expenses are reviewed monthly or more frequently by management. Trends and challenges will be monitored and addressed through internal management discussions, consultation with professional advisors, such as the organization’s outside certified public accountants and marketing consultants; coupled with strong fiscal practices.

Financial budget reviews will be conducted by management on a quarterly basis, and reported to appropriate Company staff. Financial data will not be made public.

With the exception of Medicaid funding, Unique Caring will also seek out any financial opportunities for clients to secure funding for the specific purpose of participation in other supportive services. Medicaid is presently funding services.

Programmatic: There shall be ongoing evaluation of Unique Caring’s adherence to the policies and procedures, state, federal and local regulations guiding placement planning. Program Directors will be responsible for weekly report submission reflecting the growth of Unique Caring’s, outreach activities, professional relationships, and staff development. Additionally, Counselors and Supervisors are responsible for reviewing client charts on a monthly basis for identification of trends in service strengths and errors, and ensuring performance indicators are at or exceed expected goals.

Stakeholder Input: Unique Caring will solicit feedback form all stakeholders on a regular schedule and at a minimum, annually. This feedback will include patient satisfaction for services provided and staffing, community stakeholder responses to outreach activities and outcomes they had experienced/noticed/ learned of, and general community response to the activities of Unique Caring. Additionally, staff will be given the opportunity to provide feedback at all staff meetings and annually, on a Staff Satisfaction survey.

Staff and clients also have access to a suggestion box to provide suggestions, comments or complaints, which is checked on a regular basis.

**Legislative / Regulatory Environment:**

Unique Caring is affected by federal, state and local regulatory requirements and rules. Unique Caring continually monitors those regulatory requirements to ensure that the facility is in full compliance, when the regulatory requirements are being review for



possible changes, Unique Caring will take an active part in providing feedback on the proposed changes and

### **Use of Technology:**

*Technology:* Unique Caring uses a combination of manual and electronic data to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided.

**Social Determinants of Health:** Unique Caring will collaborate with local community based organizations to provide any additional supportive client needs outside of the services provided. We will ensure that the clients served will receive any and all required medical and or social support services not provided within the continuum of Unique Caring, to ensure the total health and welfare of the clients served.

Systems are used, which also manages data that can be reflected in a report to analyze service delivery and client service outcomes. That data is also used to determine further service needs and performance enhancements.

Technology is used to support efficient operations, effective service delivery and performance improvement. This data becomes the foundation for all quarterly and annual reporting activities.

### **Strategies**

The following critical strategies will be pursued by **Unique Caring Foundation:**

1. Continued development and training of counseling staff.
2. Strengthen and continued development of referral agreements between Unique Caring and local state, county, and mental health agencies and stakeholders.
3. Raise community awareness of the efficacy of value of foster care.
4. Continue to explore alternate funding sources for clients.
5. Participating in industry-specific trade shows and conferences.
6. Continued development and refinement of all Company materials.
7. Annual review of the Strategic Plan to review outcomes and successes, and opportunities.

### **Conclusions**

Unique Caring is expected to increase census through implementation of community outreach activities, and thereby increase community acceptance of foster care services as well. This growth will be monitored and budgets adjusted accordingly. Performance indicators have been defined and staff will work toward achievement of those goals, exceeding goals wherever possible. Potential risks and benefits for provided services will be monitored, and strategies that respond to risks and benefits will be evaluated to strengthen services. The use of data gathered will be used to reflect progress and analyzed for strategic improvements.

Relationships with stakeholders will be enhanced by demonstration of attainment of company performance indicators, CARF accreditation, and responses to stakeholder feedback.

### **Annual Review**

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and this review shall be documented in the Annual Report, which is prepared in January/February of each year. This review will assess all Key Areas and what progress had been made to meet those key areas. Any changes in operating policies and procedures will be made, if necessary, following the annual review. The Strategic Plan will not be re-written unless necessary or in preparation for CARF accreditation renewals.