



### **Agenda Action Form Overview**

Introduction of Durham County Department of Public Health Appointees, Brad Caison as HIV Navigator and Bridget Nelson as Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience Coordinator.

### **Background/Justification**

In 2014, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) launched the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities, calling on cities and municipalities worldwide to accelerate their responses to end the HIV epidemic. The initiative originally focused on achieving the 90-90-90 targets—that 90% of people living with HIV know their status, 90% of those diagnosed are retained in care, and 90% of those in care achieve viral suppression. These benchmarks have since evolved to the 95-95-95 targets, reflecting the global commitment to push further toward ending the HIV epidemic. The initiative also emphasizes reducing stigma, addressing health inequities, and dismantling structural barriers.

Durham County formally joined the Fast Track Cities Initiative in June 2019, when the Durham County Board of Commissioners signed the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities Ending the HIV Epidemic. This action committed the County to aligning with global HIV elimination goals and working collaboratively with community partners, healthcare providers, and residents most impacted by HIV. To carry out this work, the Board authorized the creation of an HIV Navigator position within the Durham County Department of Public Health (DCoDPH). This position was established to coordinate the Fast Track Cities Durham (FTCD) initiative, build community partnerships, and develop strategies to meet the County’s commitments under the Paris Declaration.

The HIV Navigator position was first filled in July 2020. Brad Caison began working at Durham County as the HIV Navigator on September 3, 2024. The introduction of Mr. Caison will provide the Board with an opportunity to learn about Mr. Caison’s work over the last year.

In 2017, the State of Durham County’s Young Children Report was published, prepared by the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy at the request of local leaders. By providing data on the experiences of Durham’s young children, the report highlighted the need for coordinated action around early adversity. In November 2018, the Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution 18-1134, “Resolution to Support the Actions to Become an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Informed Community.” The resolution acknowledges toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences as a “growing public health crisis for the state with implications for the state’s educational, juvenile justice, criminal justice, and public health system.”

Additionally, the Board of County Commissioners created an Adverse Childhood Experiences Coordinator position to better coordinate a holistic approach that supports families and children through the Durham Adverse Childhood Experience and Resilience Taskforce (DART) and facilitate community-wide trainings to “move from awareness to action as Durham strives to become a trauma-informed community.” Since 2020, the ACEs Coordinator has supported a trauma-informed care resources library and training directory for DART through



ResilienceDurhamNC.org and trained or facilitated training for over 1,000 people in Durham in ACEs, trauma-informed care and Community Resilience Model.

The first ACEs and Resilience Coordinator, Jess Rhodes, started in August 2020 and held the position until she was promoted to Public Health Education Program Manager in the spring of 2025. The County's new ACEs Coordinator, Bridget Nelson (they/them) joined the Department of Public Health in August 2025. They look forward to ~~for~~ integrating trauma-informed care, services, and education into county and community activities, as well as collaborating with community partners to cement protective factors into every facet of life in Durham. By identifying avenues for building community resilience, Bridget seeks to improve individual and community health outcomes for all.

**Policy Impact**

This recognition is consistent with current Board policy and does not require an exception.

**Procurement Background**

Program materials will be obtained through the normal procurement process.

**Fiscal Impact**

No additional county funds are required.

**Recommendation**

The County Manager recommends that the Board recognize Brad Caison as Durham County's HIV Navigator and Bridget Nelson as Durham County's new Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resilience Coordinator.