

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2018
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Michael Amo, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Mike Anagnostakis, Kevindaryán Luján, Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel,
Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Michael D. Paduch, Minority Leader
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator
James D. O'Donnell, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Jennifer L. Roman, D.O., Orange County Medical Examiner/
Acting Commissioner of Health
Christopher Ericson, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Kerry Gallagher, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Colleen Grogan, Chief Budget Analyst
Michael Ventre, Budget Analyst

Mr. Amo opened the committee meeting at 3:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Tuohy who arrived at 3:45 p.m.

On the agenda were the highlighted important issues from the Department of Social Services monthly report for December.

Ms. Miller explained that they are in the process of finalizing their annual report and would be sent out once it is completed. They continue to see a decrease in family and temporary assistance which has been impacted by the increase in employment figures. In addition, they have seen a decline in their SNAP benefit caseloads. Due to the extremely cold winter, New York State has added a second emergency benefit for the HEAP program that will extend it to April 27, 2018.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if a constituent has never applied for the HEAP program, could they still apply. Ms. Miller replied yes.

Ms. Tautel asked for the cutoff to apply. Ms. Miller replied April 27, 2018.

Ms. Miller added that with respect to Emergency Housing Placement they are still waiting on the Point-in-Time count. They are anxious to see how those numbers compare to theirs because over the last few years that number has nearly matched. In 2017, they continued to be challenged with the use of hotel/motels as the average was very high due to the length of stay and the lack of permanent affordable housing. Medicaid numbers continue to decline as the state takes

over but there is no cut to their administrative medicaid budget for 2018. They have seen an increase in Child Protective Services with respect to neglect and reports received by the state system which has resulted in an increase of investigations and responses. In addition, they have seen an increase in Foster Care and it has been difficult to manage staff workload and cost and Adult Protective Services has remained the same.

Ms. Tautel asked if the 37 new persons assigned in Adult Protective Services were included in the average number and are they carried over monthly. Ms. Miller replied no, they are new people.

Mr. Craner clarified that the only time they would see a duplication would be if the case was closed and reopened within the same year.

Mr. Amo asked when Ms. Miller may be able to address tax bills and the impact it may have on Orange County. Ms. Miller replied that the proposed 2019 budget with its cuts has been overwhelming. It will be a matter of continuing to monitor and they have not been provided with specifics on what the impact would be but they are very concerned.

Ms. Tautel asked about staff ratio for each caseworker. Ms. Miller replied that the numbers are not dictated to them. The Governor has tried numerously to require that a child protective service worker only have 15 cases but there are many nuances with that. From the start of the investigation route they have 60 days to open and close and/or make a determination on the case and 90 days for a Family Assessment Review. They do monitor the number of overdue cases monthly as the state has provided specifics on that but they do work to stay within a reasonable realm. They are currently in the process of hiring as they have five additional positions approved.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.