

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Janet Sutherland, Chairwoman
Michael Amo, Glenn R. Ehlers, Laurie R. Tautel, Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman
Thomas J. Faggione, Majority Leader
Betsy N. Abraham, Esq., Legislative Counsel
Richard B. Golden, Esq., County Attorney
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance
Liz Matis, Budget Analyst

Ms. Sutherland opened the committee meeting at 3:31 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Anagnostakis and Ramos, who were absent.

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

Ms. Miller explained SNAP continues to be a challenge with an average of 299 applications a week and staff working overtime from other units to process applications. The COVID emergency supplement for SNAP of \$95.00 a month will be discontinued in March and New York State will be putting out information to inform consumers. She was pleased to announce that the benefits for the thirty to thirty-five consumers whose EBT cards were compromised in Orange County have been reinstated. HEAP applications continue to come in and to date the Fuel Fund has expensed about \$35,000.00 of the \$100,000.00 allotment. Emergency Housing placement numbers are returning to pre-pandemic numbers. The Medicaid waiver will end at the end of February. The 2024 State Budget proposal would end the Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) federal pass-thru to counties. The elimination of the eFMAP federal pass-thru will cost Orange County approximately \$9 million in 2024 and will only increase every year. There is a great deal of discussion and advocacy with their trade associations, NYSAC, and the New York State Public Health Welfare Association has spoken out strongly against this plan. Family Assessment Response (FAR) has balanced out and Child Protective Services has seen a reduction in reporting. Raise the Lower Age was implemented on December 29, 2022, and to date no referrals have been received and for 2022, Foster Care numbers were at 248.

Mr. Tuohy asked what was being done to prevent EBT thefts in the future. Ms. Miller replied that safeguards have been put in place.

Chairwoman Bonelli addressed the issue on the Affordable Care Act and stated that a memorialization resolution would be going before the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations committee opposing the end of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) federal pass-thru to counties.

Ms. Sutherland asked if Family Assessment Response (FAR) was optional. Ms. Miller replied no, they must participate.

Ms. Sutherland asked if a child is adopted through foster care what services stay with that child. Ms. Miller replied that they would continue to receive counseling and support and they would still receive a stipend throughout the care of the child.

Mr. Tuohy asked about the homeless count that is typically done in January. Ms. Miller replied that HUD requires that Continuum of Care conduct a Point in Time count. She recently spoke with Christopher Molinelli, Executive Director of HONORehg who stated that it went well and she should have the figures for the next meeting.

Ms. Sutherland stated that she would be reaching out to Mr. Molinelli to come before the committee to discuss the recent Point in Time count.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.