

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Rob Sassi, Chairman
Michael Amo, Mike Anagnostakis, Kevindaryán Luján, James D. O'Donnell,
Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel, Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Harry Porr, Acting County Executive
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Irina Gelman M.D., Commissioner of Health
Christopher Ericson, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Michael Ventre, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Robert Dietrich, Director, Community Health Outreach
Colleen Grogan, Chief Budget Analyst
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Mr. Sassi opened the committee meeting at 3:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept and appropriate one-time allocation from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) federal funds to assist local social service districts not only with the development and implementation of a Homeless Services plan, but also with improving connectivity as well as further reporting capabilities with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The funds being provided will help to improve the overall quality of planning as well as data collection as it relates to the homeless population, \$45,000.00, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Miller explained that at the request of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) every county across the state must submit a homeless plan to them by the end of March. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) collects all the information provided from across the system with funds provided to support their work with CARES and the extracting of data that will be part of the report going forward. Since the award was made Terri Torchio, Director of Economic Independence at the Department of Social Services, was successful in working with Continuum of Care and putting a coordinated entry together that will open on April 1, 2019. They received approval from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to spend beyond the original deadline and to hire through HONOR a Coordinated Entry Coordinator. Everyone that is

homeless in the county will go through the coordinated entry allowing them to better manage how services are received as they move them forward and into permanent housing.

Mr. Amo asked if they would be able to create a database. Ms. Miller replied that the data base has been created with CARES Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing the database; however, they do not have the role and/or authority to pull that data out but HMIS does. HMIS will write the reports that will be submitted to the state for them with the committee having a copy of the report prior to the next committee meeting.

Mr. Amo commented that he would like them to develop their own database because in his experience it can take the state months and/or may not be usable in their format. Ms. Miller replied that CARES is contracted with the state and works locally with Continuum of Care and attend local meetings. These are local contacts not state contacts and if it becomes an issue and a separate database is needed, they would certainly do so. The data that CARES has in HMIS is only as good as what their local agencies are submitting with the coordinated entry to ensure that the data is put in timely with a timely report to use.

Mr. Amo asked if the Coordinated Entry Coordinator would be their point person for requests. Ms. Miller replied yes, along with Continuum of Care.

Ms. Miller added that she recently had a discussion with Deputy Commissioner Barbara C. Guinn of Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and they will be attending a meeting on May 2, 2019 with Docs, OMH, OASIS, OPWD and OTDA to address the needs of the homeless population and they will consider making changes on the state side that could improve and decrease evictions and increase access for the population they serve.

Mr. Amo noted that this would be a great opportunity to bring in this new individual before the committee in April and to provide critical insight on what they think should be measured with respect to homeless in Orange County.

Mr. Sassi commented that he would be meeting with HONOR tomorrow to get feedback and to continue this dialog.

Mr. Luján agreed that while this is a nationwide issue, Orange County can address chronic homelessness and its correlation. They are seeing people with substance abuse and/or mental health issues but how are they helping them. The best way to help them would be to invest in housing but how do they go about doing it.

Mr. Luján asked if this would measure where a person originally came from and not where they are serviced. There are 330,000 people in Orange County and there are areas of the county that need support and housing and knowing where they are coming from is critical as it will help them to have services in those areas. Ms. Miller replied that Mr. Luján was included in the report that included zip codes and locations where people were being temporarily housed with the majority coming from Newburgh, then Port Jervis, Middletown and Wallkill.

Motion carried 7-1 with Legislators Amo, Anagnostakis, O'Donnell, Sutherland, Tautel, Tuohy and Sassi voting in favor and Legislator Luján abstaining.

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

Ms. Miller explained that there was a slight increase with Temporary Assistance and SNAP. As previously mentioned, the housing report will be distributed prior to the committee in April that will hopefully address some questions. As of July 2018, they have exceeded the 103,000 for the number of individuals receiving medicaid in Orange County which is very significant.

Ms. Tautel asked if medicaid numbers could be broken out by town. Ms. Miller replied not by town but zip code.

Mr. Craner clarified that it does not give a specific location as zip codes can overlap into several towns.

Ms. Miller explained that a report was previously done and available on the county website but with many faults; however, she would look into what could possibly be done.

Ms. Tautel expressed concerns that certain areas are being heavily abused with respect to social services.

Ms. Miller emphasized that the special investigation unit does a great job of catching abuse with either front end detection and/or catching someone who is receiving services fraudulently. In regard to medicaid, local DSS's manage a small portion of chronic health conditions that they typically manage in long-term healthcare with anyone else receiving medicaid having to go through the exchange. In addition, the eligibility for benefits is based on income and expense relative to family size.

Mr. Craner added that out of the 103,000 over 79,000 are through the exchange and something they have no control over and could cause an issue on trying to export the numbers by zip code.

Ms. Miller added that Raise the Age statistics have been incorporated into the monthly report with 6 RTA youths arrested in January 2019, a decrease of 61% from what they were prior to Raise the Age. They had anticipated an average of approximately 14 arrests per month based on the 2017 data; however, the decrease was not surprising due to the amount of education that went into understanding how Raise the Age changed how they process youth offenders. A great deal of planning went into Raise the Age prior to its implementation on October 1, 2018 with over six hundred police officers being trained on Raise the Age, meetings with school superintendents, school staff and all county departments involved. They still remain one of the only counties in New York that has had their budget accepted by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) for Raise the Age. Everything submitted in their budget was accepted with the exception of support for the County Attorney's office, District Attorney's office and Sheriff's warrants. They have all incorporated into their budgets that when they have a caseload that allows them to draw

reimbursement from the state to cover the cost they will come forward and ask for those positions. In 2018, three youths were sent to the Department of Social Services for services and supports, and the Department of Probation provided diversion for nine individuals with most of the work at this time being done by the Department of Probation. Lastly, there were two cases that completed the legal process.

Mr. O'Donnell referred to Ms. Tautel's early question on receiving a report by municipality and what are they legally able to receive. Ms. Miller replied that it could be extracted by zip code, but it cannot be made municipality specific and the 79,000 of the 103,000 would not be accessible.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if they could get HEAP numbers by zip code. Ms. Miller replied that she would have to confer with the Department of Social Services' Information Technologies.

Ms. Tautel noted that even though the numbers would be less the 79,000 that are receiving medicaid through the state exchange would it not still be county medicaid.

Ms. Miller replied that the 2018 expenses for medicaid was \$818 million with Orange County capped at what they contribute at approximately \$70 million toward medicaid. While it is county medicaid it is not managed by the local Department of Social Services and they do not have access to those records.

Ms. Tautel asked if they would not be reflected in the report by zip code. Ms. Miller replied that they would not.

Ms. Tautel asked if the state could supply them with a report by zip code. She has heard from constituents on numerous occasions that they feel that this community is "paying on the backs of others." Ms. Miller replied that whether the cost is \$800 million or \$900 million, they would still pay \$70 million. A majority of counties within states do not contribute toward the cost of medicaid with New York being one of three states that counties contribute toward the cost of medicaid.

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.