

**HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023  
4:00 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman  
Anthony Cardoso, Assistant County Attorney  
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health  
Dr. Alicia Pointer, Commissioner of Health  
Lisa K. Lahiff, Deputy Commissioner of Health  
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center  
Donna Strecker, Director of Finance, Valley View Center  
Erin Sztendor, Budget Analyst

Mr. Tuohy opened the committee meeting at 4:12 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Luján, who was absent.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept and appropriate \$2,756,108.00 from New York State OASAS (Office of Addiction Services and Supports) from the State Opioid Abatement Settlement Fund. These funds will be allocated through RFP for approved uses per the Opioid Settlement Agreement, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Ms. Miller explained that the state received these funds directly. These funds were allocated based on three factors: opioid related fatalities, suicide rate and percentage of other than white population. They have also been given the freedom to determine how the funds would be best used in the community with the RFP currently being finalized.

Mr. Tuohy asked about the schedule A and base salary. Ms. Miller replied that the funds have an administrative portion attached. They will be adding a staff person to handle the reporting and special administrative portions.

Mr. Tuohy asked about the \$65,000.00 for hospital care. Ms. Miller replied that she would investigate and get back to the committee.

Mr. Anagnostakis pointed out that \$65,000.00 could be for either two positions or two years.

Ms. Miller responded that to her knowledge they were only adding one person. Administrative funds can be spread over the whole administrative team so other individuals could be covered by these funds.

Mr. Tuohy asked what specialty payments would be used for. Ms. Miller replied evaluations that are outside the RFP.

Mr. Amo asked what the \$2.3 million would be used for. Ms. Miller replied that the Orange County Opioid Settlement Fund Priority Areas are improving access to care and transition of care, housing and prevention. These funds will be added to the \$3.75 million they currently have and while it seems like a great deal of money these funds will be reduced significantly over the next sixteen years, and they need to ensure that they sustain these funds.

Mr. Tuohy asked for the total amount they will receive. Ms. Miller replied that it changes as the awards come in, however, she will provide a copy of the spreadsheet on funding to the committee via email. While there is not a deadline on when funds can be spent, they will be spent evenly over time.

Mr. Anagnostakis pointed out that additional plaintiffs have been added so they will have the potential for additional funds.

Ms. Sutherland added that after brainstorming and collaborating at numerous meetings with various people, organizations, business, and doctors it was decided that the three areas previously mentioned would be the best place for the monies to be best spent and the most helpful.

Mr. Amo commented as a legislature they have a responsibility to know what is happening and he was pleased to hear that Legislator Sutherland was a member of the Opioid Settlement Committee. In the end they need to know the outcomes and how they measure as this is a great deal of money.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept and appropriate funding from New York State OMH (Office of Mental Health) for Mental Health's school-based satellite clinics. This funding will help cover costs of contracted satellite clinicians, \$129,840.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Amo moved request to accept and appropriate grant funds from New York State OMH to support a contracted child psychiatrist. This consultant creates access to clinical service for children and youth, \$30,000.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for the replacement of all exterior windows and doors at 30 Harriman Drive, this includes the exterior windows facing the courtyard.

This project has been approved under the 2023 Capital Plan as Project No. 77. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$335,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health.

Ms. Miller addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to legislators. The Orange County Department of Mental Health provides funding to United Way earmarked to support the Safe School Ambassadors programs in Orange County Schools. Safe School Ambassadors is an evidence based, student-led, bullying prevention program. This year's funding will be used to train trainers to increase the number of schools involved and to continue to support current schools. The train the trainer event is in collaboration with United Way, Youth Bureau, Department of Mental Health and Orange Ulster-BOCES. The Orange County children's mental health system has received additional funding from the New York State Office of Mental Health to hire another full-time mental health provider to double program capacity in the Home and Community Based Initiative Program. This program offers crisis stabilization and support to youth transitioning from hospital or residential care to the community or to youth at risk of out of home placement. Additional funding was provided due to excellent outcomes as evident by reduction in recidivism of hospital levels, out of home placement and improvements in youth functioning at home, school and in the community. **This program is run by Rehabilitative Support Services, Inc.** The Children Mental Health Awareness Walk will be on Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 9-12 at Algonquin Park in Newburgh. Woodbury School District licensed satellite clinic will begin this week by establishing protocol for referrals, setting up office space and meeting with school staff. In collaboration with District Attorney, Dave Hoovler, they will be sponsoring an awareness event at SUNY Orange related to addiction and the impact of seeking to use fentanyl and/or accidentally ingesting fentanyl on May 9, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., National Fentanyl Awareness Day. The community can attend the event in person, or it can be viewed via livestream through the Ramapo Catskill Library System. They have filled three of the five Staff Social Worker vacancies and look forward to the additional mental health support they can offer in the community.

On the agenda was the monthly financial report on Valley View.

Ms. Strecker explained that for March 2023, IGT funding is at zero and other revenues were at \$8.6 million. Personal services were at \$4.9 million, equipment at \$22,977.00, contractual at \$1.9 million, employee benefits at \$4.9 million and serial bond interest at \$32,505.00. Their census for March was 63.76%. Medicaid utilization was at 79.61%, medicaid (HMO) at 1.95%, medicare at 11.94% and private pay at 5.61%.

Mr. Anagnostakis commented that if they had the staff it would help with occupancy and in turn, they would probably be up \$1 million from last year.

Mr. LaDue added that their recent COVID outbreak of twenty-nine residents has added to their occupancy struggles because they have been unable to accept new admissions for two weeks.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked about any recent COVID fatalities. Mr. LaDue replied that the most recent fatality was a few months ago and that was the first one in a few years.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked if in Mr. LaDue's opinion that was because residents are vaccinated. Mr. LaDue replied in his opinion, yes.

Mr. Tuohy asked how the positive cases are getting into the facility. Mr. LaDue replied that New York State changed many of their protocols including no mandatory testing of staff; however, they still require that visitors present a negative covid test upon entering the building and everyone is screened before entering the building. In addition, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) was onsite conducting an infection control audit and found no issues.

Ms. Tautel asked when the increase in cases started. Mr. LaDue replied about three weeks ago.

Mr. Tautel asked if residents went out on day visits and could the uptick in cases be from the recent holidays. Mr. LaDue replied that they do not have many residents that go out for day visits.

Mr. Tautel asked if they saw an increase in the number of visitors over the holidays. Mr. LaDue replied that while they keep a log the number of visitors is not counted; however, that is a good point.

Ms. Sutherland asked if the COVID positive residents were showing signs of COVID. Mr. LaDue replied that some are asymptomatic, and they do not know that they are positive until serial testing is done on the unit.

Mr. Amo asked about the status of vaccinations at Valley View. Mr. LaDue replied that everyone is on a different vaccination schedule based on when boosters were released, and some residents are not vaccinated because they chose not to be. A vast majority have been vaccinated and received their boosters, but it is not at 100% compliance.

Mr. Amo added that the CDC might say that if someone is six months past their last vaccination are over a certain age and/or compromised their vulnerability of catching COVID is higher.

Mr. LaDue agreed.

Mr. Anagnostakis requested the number of residents that are testing positive for COVID and how many of those are not current on their vaccinations be forwarded to the committee. This could help to determine that this may not be a lethal strain going forward because if compromised older people are getting it and not dying it could be a good sign.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Laurence LaDue, Commissioner of Valley View.

Mr. LaDue addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to legislators. Valley View's census on April 17, 2023, was 61.11%. They suspended all admissions two weeks ago due to rising COVID cases, but short-term admissions will resume on April 19, 2023. Valley View CHHA census is fourteen with two new admissions pending. They currently have twenty-nine COVID positive residents (two in the hospital) and seven COVID positive employees. The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) was onsite conducting an infection control audit. Sixty-six nursing staff qualified for the attendance incentive in its first week. The third vesting period for the Healthcare Worker Bonus Program ended on March 31, 2023 and they must submit their data by April 30, 2023. They received notice last week that the Office of Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) will be conducting a second audit. The OMIG Medicaid audit is for the period of August 1, 2019 through September 30, 2022. The purpose of the audit is to determine the existence of any improper payments made on behalf of Medicaid fee for service recipients. The audit and review are directed at assessing provider compliance with applicable regulations and requirements and are routine in nature. Valley View self-reported an occurrence among residents to the New York State Department of Health. They came onsite to investigate, and they received three deficiencies (minor on scope and severity scale). As a result, they submitted a Plan of Correction that included staff education and internal audits, which was approved and they are now back in compliance. Lastly, National Skilled Nursing Care Week is from May 14th to May 20th.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept and appropriate funds from the New York State Department of Health for the Healthy Orange Goes Green (HOGG) grant for a one-year period from 3/1/2023 – 7/31/2023, \$3,000.00, seconded by Mr. Amo.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept and appropriate funds from the New York State Department of Health in the amount of \$987,510.00 (\$197,502 per year) for the Breastfeeding Friendly grant for a five-year period from 7/1/2023 – 6/30/2028 and to appropriate year one funds from 7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024 in the amount of \$197,502.00 into the operating budget, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept and appropriate into the operating budget grant funds from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute/Health Research, Inc. for the Expanded Partner Services Program (ExPS). The grant contract period is 4/1/23 – 3/31/24, \$378,721.00, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the agenda was a Department Update from Dr. Alicia Pointer, Commissioner of Health.

Dr. Pointer addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to legislators. Infectious Disease are as follows: Flu: Orange County currently has 56 reported cases which is a 21% decrease from the previous week. COVID: Orange County's community level is Low. There are 6.5 positive tests per 100,000 people. Total deaths are 1,286 since March 2020. The federal public health emergency will end on May 11, 2023. Polio: wastewater has been negative for the poliovirus since December 15, 2022. Pertussis: From January to April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Orange County has had 28 cases of pertussis (whooping cough). This is significantly over our baseline. Last year, Orange County had 2 cases over the same time. They have been keeping close track of cases and have sent out two Public Health Advisories over the last six months. This will also be discussed at the Orange County Health Coalition in Kiryas Joel in May. Administrative: The mobile unit will be delivered on Friday, April 21, 2023. The Orange County Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 24, 2023. Environmental Health: The Legoland spray ground plan approvals were completed on April 10, 2023. Summer camp guidance letters have been sent out for the 2023 camp season. Tobacco control/vaping: They are updating their violation process and are in the process of issuing violations against the sale of flavored vapes. New York State will receive \$112 million from JUUL Labs, Inc. (the nation's leading e-cigarette producer) to support underage vaping abatement programs. The Health Department along with their partners will continue to follow this closely. Lastly, The Orange County Medical Reserve Corps provided first aid and cooling stations to the first responders during the recent brush fires.

Ms. Tautel moved resolution of the Orange County Legislature recognizing "National Skilled Nursing Care Week", May 14, 2023 through May 20, 2023, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.