

**HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Peter V. Tuohy, Chairperson
Glenn R. Ehlers, Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
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
Erin Sztendor, Budget Analyst

Mr. Tuohy opened the committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Anagnostakis, Amo and Luján, who were absent.

Ms. Tautel moved request to appropriate the remaining balance of unused 2022 CIT funding in the amount of \$293,421.07 to be used in 2023. These funds were awarded from NYS OMH (Office of Mental Health) by sponsoring legislator, NYS Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther. The funding of \$500,000.00 is for the period 1/1/22 – 12/31/22 was accepted through Resolution No. 9 of 2022, 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. She addressed the recent news articles surrounding mental health crimes and victims of crime. Orange County is powerful in their partnerships and have a great collaborative system of care to help those struggling with mental illness, but it also takes the support of family members. The System of Care (SOC) Coordinating Council met to begin the creation of a Children's Services webpage highlighting services across systems. The Orange County Training Institute hosted a 2-day advanced Motivational Interview training to help clinicians and direct care professionals enhance their skills to help engage and guide individuals toward positive change. The Department of Mental Health provided welcoming remarks at the SUNY Orange Human Services

Recognition Event to encourage students to apply for positions in Orange County. The Orange County Department of Health participated in and gave welcoming remarks at the Children's Mental Health Walk at Algonquin Park on May 6th to raise awareness and acceptance of children's mental health needs. They participated in a drug take back event at the Newburgh Activity Center with Team Newburgh to meet one of their deliverables for the Columbia HEALing Study and was for the 60 and older club and focused on seniors. They handed out medication time capsules for safer medication storage as well as Deterra bags to over 100 Seniors. They also partnered with the Orange County Department of Health to implement an additional 38 naloxone boxes at both SUNY Orange and SUNY Newburgh. Moving forward the same partnership will be adding boxes to County Buildings and Departments. They already have them in approximately seventeen locations.

Ms. Miller added that Chris Molinelli from HONORehg applied for funds from the New York State Office of Mental Health for a Safe Options Support Team (SOS). The team will be comprised of a coordinator and eight staff members consisting of two social workers, two case managers, and four peer support. Their goal is to integrate into their current community outreach team and connect those that are homeless, struggling from mental health and substance abuse issues by bringing them into the system of care.

Ms. Tautel moved request to create a Stationary Engineer (RHCS) Per Diem title with a salary rate of \$35.00 per hour. The hourly rate will increase 3% annually through 2026. Employees in this class will supplement the duties of full-time staff with special projects and/or in the case of emergencies (funds to come from existing budget), seconded by Mr. Ehlers.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved request a rate increase for consultants providing services for the Valley View Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA). This increase allows Valley View's rates to remain competitive in the marketplace and amongst competitors (funds to come from existing budget), seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request supplemental appropriation of funds for a proposed 2023 capital project expenditure to replace beds utilized for resident care. The inventory of beds has reached economic life. Replacement and modernization are necessary. This is proposed Capital Project No. 132. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$515,000.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Ms. Tautel pointed out that the sales quote provided expired on May 14, 2023.

Mr. LaDue responded that they should honor the quote.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved to request supplemental appropriation for a new capital project for the carbon filtration water project. This project is not included in the 2023 Capital Plan. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$375,501.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

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

Mr. LaDue explained that for April 2023, IGT funding is at zero and other revenues were at \$11 million. Personal services were at \$6.4 million, equipment at \$26,896.00, contractual at \$2.9 million, employee benefits at \$6.1 million and serial bond interest at \$36,764.00. Their census for April was 62.10%. Medicaid utilization was at 77.61%, medicaid (HMO) at 1.76%, medicare at 12.54% and private pay at 7.41%.

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 May 15, 2023, was 61.94%. They have three units closed. They are taking short-term admissions and the CHHA census is nineteen. They currently have zero COVID positive residents or staff. The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) updated mask guidance and masks are no longer mandatory for visitors, only staff that have not received the influenza vaccine must wear masks at work until the influenza season is deemed over by the NYSDOH updated mask guidance and masks are no longer mandatory for visitors. The Attendance Incentive information is as follows: Week 1: 67 employees received the incentive, Week 2: 53 employees, Week 3: 66 employees, Week 4: 68 employees, Week 5: 69 employees and Week 6: 62 employees. They will continue to conduct cost analysis on the program. They have hired a full-time LPN, per-diem LPN, and a full-time RN/Nurse Care Manager. Unfortunately, they do not have an update on the latest IGT payment, and they may have to close the 2022 audit without accruing for this payment. The New York State budget included a Medicaid rate increase of 6.5%-7.5% pending Medicare approval. Lastly, National Skilled Nursing Care week is from May 14th through May 20th.

Mr. Tuohy asked about the Medicaid rate increase which was clawed back from the 10% they were seeking. Mr. LaDue replied that they were pursuing a higher amount because they have not received an appropriate increase for many years and while the 6.5% will not fill their medicaid gap it will help their budget this year.

Mr. Cheney asked for the current waitlist for long-term beds. Mr. LaDue replied that it's in the upper fifties with no waitlist for short-term beds.

Ms. Tautel asked if job fairs would be held with the upcoming graduations looming. Mr. LaDue replied yes, they also attend any county involved job fairs such as the one tomorrow at the Galleria in Middletown.

Ms. Tautel asked if they had considered having one at Valley View. Mr. LaDue replied yes, and they might now that the building has reopened. They also attend any college graduations that have nursing programs.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept and appropriate funds from the New York State Department of Health Immunization Action Plan for the period 4/1/23 – 3/31/28 in the amount of \$1,011,315.00 as well as appropriate first year funds in the amount of \$202,263.00 for the period 4/1/23 – 3/31/24, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept and appropriate scholarship funding from the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO). Funds are to be used for three (3) employees to travel to and take the exam to obtain Certification Infection Control (CIC). Includes online access to study materials and practice exams, \$2,370.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to appropriate year two funds from the New York State Department of Health for the Healthy Neighborhoods Program in the amount of \$275,000.00 for the period 4/1/23 – 3/31/24, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to accept and appropriate funds from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for the Orange County Department of Health/Healthy Orange Farm Fresh (HOFF) grant for the period 5/1/23 – 8/31/24, \$22,000.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Dr. Pointer explained that this is a collaboration with farmers markets and pays for a Farmers Market Coordinator and farm boxes.

Mr. Tuohy asked if Health Department staff are at all farmers markets. Dr. Pointer replied some, and for those with food insecurities and/or medical needs they distribute coupons for the produce program. In addition, they conduct outreach and educate on their various programs.

Mr. Tuohy asked how coupons are accessed. Dr. Pointer responded that a few local providers provide them to patients with food insecurities. At the Farmers Markets, the Health Department staff will screen individuals and if someone has a history and/or current food insecurity they will receive coupons to purchase produce.

Mr. Tuohy asked for clarification on what food insecurity is. Dr. Pointer replied that it's having trouble in accessing affordable food, sufficient food and/or healthy foods and it could be a short-term problem or long-term problem.

Ms. Tautel asked if they attend every farmers market in the county. Dr. Pointer replied no, this program supports the Newburgh Farmers Market. They have been to the Middletown Farmers Market and a few others with respect to outreach but with their Mobile Health Unit, they would be happy to go wherever they are needed.

Mr. Cheney asked how individuals with food insecurities in other areas would access coupons. Dr. Pointer replied that some providers have them along with various community partners. Once the program restarts for 2023 she will provide the committee with additional information on their partners.

Mr. Tuohy asked that Dr. Pointer provide the committee with a list of partners in Orange County in addition to Newburgh and Middletown.

Ms. Tautel asked for the Mobile Health Unit contact person. Dr. Pointer replied that she would forward the contact information for Meg Oakes to the committee.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved request to create one (1) Senior Public Health Technician position, Grade 13 (funds to come from existing budget), seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Dr. Pointer explained that this position would replace one of the Public Health Technician positions on their water engineering side. There is currently no promotional opportunity on that side, and they tend to leave for either the sanitary side or leave altogether.

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 Diseases are as follows: COVID: End of Public Health Emergency Declaration. The CDC is no longer tracking COVID cases on their data tracker; however, the following measures will still be available weekly: Emergency visits positive for COVID-19, Hospital admissions, COVID-19 deaths, Wastewater surveillance (looking to expand to other municipalities

Vaccines and Treatments), federally-purchased vaccines will be free based on availability, several-month transition to typical health market which may lead to cost-sharing depending on insurance and whether in-network and COVID testing may be subject to cost-sharing depending on insurance coverage. The Orange County Health Department will continue to offer free vaccines and testing as long as it's available. Flu: Orange County currently has 34 reported cases and statewide cases have increased slightly. Polio: From August 2022 through March 2023, polio vaccination rates for children under age 2 increased from 39% to 57%. They continue to monitor wastewater results, support local providers, and collaborate with the New York State Department of Health. Pertussis: From January to May 3rd, Orange County has had 35 cases of pertussis (whooping cough). This continues to be over their baseline. Most cases are in younger unvaccinated children. The Orange County Health Coalition will take place on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Early Intervention: 307 children are on the waitlist for preschool related services, e.g. speech, physical therapy, special education (note: many children in Early Intervention 0-3 are also on waitlists for services). 167 children are on the waitlist for preschool programs and there were 67 attendees at the Early Intervention Preschool Collaborative Conference. Many good ideas came out of the conference including increasing preschool services groups because for some services young children progress more in groups rather than one-on-one. Tobacco control/vaping: The Orange County Department of Health has received questions about unregulated marijuana sales. The New York State 2024 Budget allows Office of Cannabis Management to enforce regulations against unregulated stores. These include fines up to \$20,000/day, closing orders, and tenant removal. They continue to monitor vaping and underage tobacco sales and to educate business on what they need to do. Administrative: The Mobile Health Unit was delivered on Friday, April 21, 2023, and their first event was at Head Start in Newburgh. Upcoming events include the Senior Health Fair and a more regular presence in the City of Port Jervis.

Mr. Tuohy asked what they were doing to increase the number of polio vaccinations. Dr. Pointer replied that a great deal of outreach was done early on, and it could be from viewing the wastewater results, provider education, additional outreach and support. They have a long way to go, and polio is a warm weather disease.

Mr. Tuohy asked how often the waitlist for preschool related services changes. Dr. Pointer replied that the list changes when children age out of the program.

Ms. Sutherland asked what the group size would be. Dr. Pointer replied that it would be four and under.

Mr. Cheney asked for the results of their last effort regarding the sale of tobacco products to youths under the age of 18. Dr. Pointer replied that underage sales is only one part of Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA). Flavored vapes are a bigger challenge as they can only be fined and flavored vapes are a huge moneymaker and the fines are just a cost of doing business. They are also advising building owners/landlords and informing them on what their tenant is doing including any violations and/or fines they have received regarding underage sales or sales of flavored vapes. They are hopeful that this tactic will be successful, but it is a challenge. They also have the ability to assign points and after so many points the business risks the loss of tobacco sales, fines and loss of their lottery sales, which can be an incentive.

Mr. Cheney asked for the results over the last year relative to fines and/or removal of lottery sales. Ms. Lahiff presented a brief overview of the inspection process, complaint process, violation procedure and hearing process. In 100% of the cases last year the fines and violations were upheld. The Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention (ATUPA) program then notifies the state, New York State Department of Health and the Division of Taxation and Finance to affect their tobacco license and lottery license which has been successful.

Mr. Cheney asked how many vendors have lost their ability to sell lottery tickets within the last year. Dr. Pointer replied that she would get the number of violations and the number of locations that have lost either their tobacco license and/or lottery license as it is tracked quarterly.

Mr. Cheney asked if the state has ever said that a violation was not worthy of restricting the sales of lottery tickets. Dr. Pointer replied no, they have not, and they would have to sell more than once to get the number of points needed to have lottery sales revoked. They have run into the issue of where a location has had their license to sell tobacco revoked and they either open under a different name immediately or they continue to sell even though their license has been revoked.

Mr. Cheney asked if they announce who has violated the law and been found guilty. Dr. Pointer replied no, but they have in the past.

Mr. Cheney requested that Dr. Pointer inquire as to why it was discontinued and if it should be restarted.

Ms. Tautel commented that she understood that it was stopped because it was not working as a shaming tactic as anticipated but as magnet to purchase there.

Mr. Cheney emphasized that this could be an opportunity for the community to react and respond negatively to someone that is selling tobacco products to underage youth.

Mr. Cheney asked if they considered having the Mobile Health Unit at subsidized senior housing apartments. Dr. Pointer replied yes, Department of Health nurses currently go to senior housing locations and having the Mobile Health Unit there will be an asset as it offers everything they do in their clinics. They are currently working on a calendar for the county website showing where the Mobile Health Unit will be.

Ms. Sutherland asked who a municipality and/or organization would contact to have the Mobile Health Unit visit. Dr. Pointer replied Patient Services.

Ms. Tautel moved resolution of the Orange County Legislature designating June 25, 2023 through July 1, 2023 as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, seconded by Ms. Sutherland

Motion carried. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.