

**HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Peter V. Tuohy, Chairperson
Michael Amo, Glenn R. Ehlers, Thomas J. Faggione, Kevindaryán Luján,
Janet Sutherland, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: Katie Bonelli, Chairwoman
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Dr. Irina Gelman, Commissioner of Health
Christopher Ericson, Deputy Commissioner of Health
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center
Donna Strecker, Director of Finance, Valley View Center
Alison Tyack, Director of Personnel Management, Human Resources
Dena Sena, Budget Analyst

Mr. Tuohy opened the committee meeting at 4:03 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Anagnostakis who was absent.

Ms. Tautel moved request to create one (1) Full Time Fee Negotiator position and abolish two (2) Part Time Fee Negotiator positions currently vacant. The majority of funding for the new position will be covered through fee revenue, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Ms. Miller explained that their clinicians are producing beyond the 1,240 units of service a year and they are bringing on the Monroe-Woodbury School District satellite with the Goshen Central School District satellite forthcoming.

Mr. Tuohy asked if filling this position will be a problem due to staffing issues. Ms. Miller replied that they are reaching out to colleges and advertising on social media sites.

Ms. Sutherland asked if it could be a provisional hire while they wait on their certification. Ms. Miller replied no, because of insurance requirements; however, they may approach the Department of Human Resources to address that issue.

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 all legislators (see original minutes). They recently participated in a state level cross systems meeting to address improving supports for local youths with needs across multiple systems. They have received the \$1 Million (\$500,000.00 for 2022 and \$500,000.00 for 2023) to support the expansion of their Orange County Crisis Continuum from Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther. They are working with their contract providers and police departments to operationalize this expansion. Welcome Orange held an event for Children's Mental Health Awareness Week on May 7, 2022. A zero to five age committee was created to acknowledge that prevention starts early with Georgetown providing technical assistance under their SAMSA funding. The Columbia HEALing Communities will go live in July 2022.

On the agenda was the monthly report on Valley View.

Ms. Strecker explained that IGT funding was at \$2.1 million, other revenues at \$8.5 million and emergency disaster assistance at \$86,455.00. Personal services were at \$6 million, equipment at \$19,911.00, contractual at \$2.5 million, employee benefits were at \$5.9 million and serial bond interest at \$39,935.00.

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 all legislators (see original minutes). Valley View's census on May 16, 2022, was 68.89%. They still have two units closed but are accepting short-term admissions (only up to 12 on one unit) and the CHHA census was at sixteen. Ten employees have tested positive for COVID-19 with no residents testing positive. No units are currently on precautions and visitation is still allowed. They will be hosting a COVID-19 vaccine POD in conjunction with the Orange County Department of Health on May 18, 2022, for residents and staff. Any COVID-19 vaccines needed (first dose, second dose, first booster or second booster) will be administered. Valley View is currently undergoing an audit from the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General, they are specifically looking at the capital component of their medicaid rate from 2016-2022. They are also working with O'Connor Davies to finalize their 2021 audit. Lastly, the New York State budget included bonus/staffing retention funds for healthcare frontline staff and they are waiting on the guidelines from New York State for payout.

Mr. Strecker followed up on a question from last month regarding revenue for the Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA). As of April 2022, they have generated \$87,000.00 in revenue and expensed \$124,000.00.

Mr. LaDue added that the community and hospitals know of the CHHA, and they are receiving referrals from them. When the CHHA was established, they thought most of the patients and fees would be from Valley View short-term residents; however, their short-term resident census is low which is affecting the CHHA.

Ms. Tautel asked for the specifics of the bonus/staffing retention funds for healthcare frontline staff. Mr. LaDue replied that he did not have the information with him, but he would send it to the committee.

Mr. Amo presented a brief update on the Valley View Advisory committee which included a conceptual plan to possibly create a long-term care campus to support Valley View and residents of the county.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept grant funds from the New York State Department of Health for the Perinatal and Infant Community Health Collaboratives Program in the amount of \$2,200,000.00 for the period 7/1/2022 – 6/30/2027 and to appropriate first year funds in the amount of \$440,000.00 for the contract period of 7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Dr. Gelman explained that the Orange County Department of Health responded to a Request for Application (RFA), and it was awarded in March 2022. This is a five-year grant that will examine the social, ecological, environmental and community conditions that affect woman and infants while identifying and finding solutions to the barriers they face. The focus will be in the following municipalities: Newburgh, Middletown, Port Jervis, Chester, Goshen, Highland Falls, Highland Mills, Wallkill, New Windsor, Pine Bush, Walden, Monroe and Palm Tree.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept and appropriate year five funds into the operating budget for the Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention (ATUPA) grant from the New York State Department of Health for the period 4/1/2022 – 3/31/2023, \$97,198.00, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Dr. Gelman stated that the primary activity is the enforcement of New York State Public Health Law Article 13-F. In this grant year, 392 compliance checks were conducted resulting in 28 sales of tobacco or flavored vape products to minors. They met the goal of completing at least one compliance check for each facility and second and third inspections for all vendors with points on their records.

Mr. Amo asked about the curve over the last three to five years and is catching these individuals improving. Dr. Gelman replied that the ATUPA now includes vape products and early on there was some ambiguity regarding vape products resulting in some carry over. This makes it difficult to gage if some of the violations included those products.

Mr. Amo asked if that information can be extracted to understand where they are. Dr. Gelman replied that she would investigate and get back to the committee.

Discussion ensued between Dr. Gelman and legislators on the sale of marijuana, permit process by the Office of Cannabis Management prior to selling, working with law enforcement, possibility of including marijuana in the ATUPA program, development of procedures and education from the Office of Cannabis Management, community health outreach marketing, compliance of vendor, educational component of the ATUPA program, increase in younger kids smoking and vaping,

results of school surveys, perception of use by parents, THC component, design and names of products can be misconstrued as something else and ADAC training.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel request to accept and appropriate year five funds into the operating budget for the period 4/1/2022 – 3/31/2023 from the New York State Department of Health Immunization Action Program, \$189,605.00, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Dr. Gelman explained that this program supports ongoing immunization initiatives. Orange County has seen a considerable decrease in immunizations of two-year-old residents since 2020 with the county currently at 37.39% versus the rest of New York State (outside of New York City) which is at 67%.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved request to accept grant funds from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute for the Disease Intervention Services for the period 1/1/2022 – 12/31/2026 in the amount of \$1,125,000.00 and to appropriate into the operating budget first year funds in the amount of \$225,000.00 for the period 1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Dr. Gelman explained that in 2021, Orange County was listed as one the top five counties outside of New York City with increased diagnosis of early syphilis and congenital syphilis.

Motion carried. All in favor.

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

Dr. Gelman addressed the committee and highlighted several key points in the update that was emailed to all legislators (see original minutes). The Wastewater COVID-19 analysis project at six different wastewater treatment plants in Orange County continues. A meeting was held with the New York State Department of Health Wastewater Program Specialist on May 5, 2022. According to the New York State Department of Health, Orange County leads the state with the most comprehensive monitoring program. The Department of Health is holding COVID-19 vaccinations by appointment only in their Newburgh and Middletown Offices and with interested school districts on vaccinations for students. They also continue to administer booster vaccinations to homebound residents. Their Health Summit will be held on June 28, 2022, at the Rowley Center on the SUNY Orange Campus. Listening sessions continue with residents about their health concerns and needs with sessions being held in the cities of Port Jervis and Middletown and Town of Blooming Grove and provides an opportunity for the Health Department to gather important feedback for the Community Health Assessment. The next listening sessions will be held in the Town of Chester on

May 16, 2022, City of Newburgh on May 23, 2022 (English) and May 25, 2022 (Spanish). While they have done a great deal of outreach and social media messaging, they would appreciate any help legislators could provide in getting this information out to their communities. The Division of Epidemiology Director will be presenting at the National Association of Counties and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Annual Conference in July in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health and Cornell University on the establishment of the Public Health Fellowship Program in the county. They have currently hired nine fellows with one more coming the end of July and a coordinator by the end of the summer.

Dr. Gelman addressed Public Health Alert No. 4 that was issued on May 6, 2022, "Atypical presentation of Syphilis coupled with continued increase in reported cases in Orange County" and Public Health Alert No. 5 that was issued on May 14, 2022, "Childhood Immunization Update" (see original minutes).

Mr. Ehlers asked if homebound residents still only received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Dr. Gelman replied no, they are receiving Moderna also since the new recommendations were released a few months ago.

Mr. Amo asked about the inconsistency between the CDC website labeling Orange County as "high infection rate" with respect to COVID-19 cases and what Dr. Gelman has stated. Dr. Gelman replied that the CDC is using new metrics which classifies Orange County as "high." While they are seeing an increase in cases, they are not seeing the hospitalizations, mortality, or persistent increases like they did with Omicron. She encouraged the public to upload the free public health app to stay up to date.

Ms. Tautel asked if someone tests positive at home for COVID-19 and calls the hotline or their physician would it be included in the reporting process. Dr. Gelman replied no, COVID-19 home tests are not included in any totals.

Mr. Luján asked if all Public Health Fellows had been hired. Dr. Gelman replied no, nineteen were approved, nine have been hired leaving ten positions to be filled.

Ms. Tautel asked if the county has any resources to address the baby formula shortage. Dr. Gelman replied the New York State Department of Health has issued an alert including a link to resources that she will forward to the committee.

Mr. Tuohy asked for an update on the bird flu and has an alert and/or advisory been issued. Dr. Gelman replied that there are no confirmed cases in Orange County and an alert and advisory was issued, and she has spoken to Cornell Cooperative Extension to pass the information along, and they are watching it closely as well.

Ms. Tautel moved resolution of the Orange County Legislature designating June 26, 2022 through July 2, 2022 as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.