

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2018
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Michael Amo, Chairman
Mike Anagnostakis, Kevindaryán Luján, Janet Sutherland, Peter V. Tuohy

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
James D. O'Donnell, Legislator
Paul Ruskiewicz, Legislator
Kathy Stegenga, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Donna McCarey, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources
Alison Tyack, Director of Personnel Management, Human Resources
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Todd Craner, Fiscal Director, Department of Social Services
Laurence LaDue, Commissioner, Valley View Center
Donna Strecker, Director of Finance, Valley View Center
Colleen Grogan, Chief Budget Analyst

Mr. Amo opened the committee meeting at 3:35 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present **with the exception of Legislator Luján** who arrived at 3:45 p.m. and Legislators Bonelli and Tautel who were absent.

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

Ms. Miller commented that they continue to see a decrease in Temporary Assistance, SNAP benefits and Safety Net numbers due to their improved economy and employment numbers remaining consistent. HEAP payments for 2017-2018 have been processed and they had 47 families in hotel/motels in March. Medicaid numbers remained consistent as they continue with New York State's takeover of medicaid.

Ms. Miller addressed the question from last month's meeting on the cost of medicaid and the reduction in skilled nursing facility costs with part of the reduction due to an increase in managed care.

Mr. Amo asked if Ms. Miller could address New York State's withdrawal from the long-term managed care model and fee for service. Ms. Miller replied that it was very costly, not managed well for those that were unaccustomed to serving that population and cost savings were not realized.

Mr. Amo asked if there was an alternative plan. Ms. Miller replied no.

Mr. Amo noted that long-term managed care was started because of the spiraling fee for service in the medicaid system and its extreme cost but if they return to the fee for service

medicaid system, the cost will continue to escalate. Ms. Miller agreed as Orange County sees a cost of approximately \$750 to \$800 million.

Mr. Amo commented that the cost is close to \$60 billion statewide but where are they going to get the funds and what programs will be cut to pay for it.

Ms. Miller explained that they are planning to continue the good efforts put in place by the stakeholders to reduce costs.

Ms. Miller continued stating that Child Protective Services numbers decreased in June but overall, they have seen an increase in their average from 2014 to present. Foster Care numbers for June were very high at 426 with their normal average at 399. The challenge and cost to manage that increase has been intense to the department but they continue to work collaboratively under the lean project and court improvement project to either reunite them with their family or placed into their forever home within 12 to 15 months. Data shows that in 2016 they had children in care for an average of 19 months, 16 months in 2017 and 13 months in 2018.

Mr. Anagnostakis commented that the Child Protective Services numbers for June was 164 and the lowest it has been in four years. So, did everything come together in June or was there another factor that caused the four year low and would that trend continue. Ms. Miller replied that it was an anomaly.

Mr. Craner explained that how the Traditional Response and Family Assistance Response (FAR) reports are separated also affects that number.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked for the difference. Ms. Miller replied that Family Assistance Response (FAR) are for lower level reports and Traditional Response reports are for more serious reports; however, a Family Assistance Response (FAR) report can be upgraded to a Traditional Response if needed.

Ms. Sutherland asked about the ten (10) children discharged from Foster Care. Ms. Miller replied that they have been released to a forever home.

Ms. Sutherland asked about the frequency of children using all available services and then discharged. Ms. Miller clarified that a child is never returned to an unsafe environment and would remain in the foster care system until a safe option is planned out and approved by the court or they have aged out. They can sign themselves out at 18 but new legislation allows them to stay in foster care until they are 21. Under federal mandate they are obligated to have children in a forever home and out Foster Care within 12 to 15 months; however, that does not happen as New York State is not reaching that goal.

Mr. Amo asked if Ms. Miller would be presenting any surprises and/or concerns during the 2019 budget process. Ms. Miller replied that they have had their initial budget hearing with the County Executive with the expectation that every department come in at flat county taxation; however, that can be difficult. Several issues were discussed; increase in human service caseloads, homeless trends, affordable housing and Raise the Age but Raise the Age will not be a county taxation issue. With respect to Raise the Age there are thirteen other counties and providers that will be providing options to them and they are in the process of getting contracts and submitting their draft budget proposal to New York State. Raise the Age will affect the departments of Probation,

Mental Health, County Attorney, District Attorney and Sheriff's office and they will hear more as the budget is prepared and submitted. If managed properly and the staffing in contractual services is increased to match the need, no additional county taxation will be needed per the State of New York.

Mr. Amo suggested Tiffany N. Gagliano, Chief Assistant County Attorney come before the committee with an update on Raise the Age.

Ms. Miller explained that she along with Tiffany N. Gagliano, Chief Assistant County Attorney and Derek Miller, Director of Probation share the responsibility of calling the 44 stakeholders together and she would recommend they discuss how they would like to hear the update on Raise the Age.

Legislative Counsel Reed added that NYSAC recently held a webinar on Raise the Age with multiple state agencies participating and providing updates on what they are doing in preparation for the October 2018 rollout.

Mr. Luján asked if a decision was made on the location of the facility because at a recent Public Safety and Emergency Services committee meeting they discussed the possibility of having a facility in Orange County due to the constraints of low income families. Ms. Miller replied that due to the regulatory requirements and lack of capital funds to cover the costs for the building and staffing it would not be feasible. The communities that are doing it have facilities in place that they would expand. However, their efforts will be to keep as many youths as possible in their home and community.

Mr. Luján expressed concern with the cost of transportation.

Ms. Miller replied that New York State will be reimbursing for the cost of Raise the Age youth.

Legislative Counsel Reed clarified that female and male youths must be separated with a female facility in Coxsackie, New York and three other facilities for males.

Mr. Amo suggested Ms. Miller look closely at the data she will be presenting so that it can be monitored.

Ms. Miller explained that they would all be responsible for reporting to New York State.

On the agenda was a discussion on Emergency Housing Placements – cost to the County and remediation efforts.

Ms. Miller addressed the issue of emergency housing and presented the committee with a handout (see original minutes) on Temporary Housing Assistance for the Homeless in Orange County, Regulations of the Department of Social Services, BICS payments by selected payment types, identifying permanent housing, developing an independent living plan and a list of providers in Orange County. In addition, she does have available through email their administrative notices and the complete Rules and Regulations. They are required to house anyone legally residing and/or found in Orange County with the goal to move people toward permanent housing options.

Ms. Miller explained the "Where Found" concept. If a person moves into the county from another state and/or county and is found to be homeless they can take advantage of Orange County's services and be housed as homeless. It is the responsibility of Orange County and every other county in New York State to house them.

Ms. Miller explained the process after someone is identified as homeless. Once identified they go to the Housing Resource Center who shares that responsibility with Catholic Charities. After hours, calls and temporary placements for immediate housing are handled by HONOR EHG with two shelter locations; one in the city of Newburgh and one in the city of Middletown. The following day they will go to the Housing Resource Center where Catholic Charities conducts their initial interview and the Department of Social Service staff begin the eligibility process for benefits.

Ms. Miller added that on the Department of Planning website there is a document that depicts the housing projections for Orange County from 2006 to 2020. The document shows the cost of income, available units and gap analysis. The gap in housing availability based on income and affordability is significant and was expected to become greater since the report's creation in 2009. They have held several meetings to address the need for affordable housing with four applications going in to the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) to develop new affordable housing options in Orange County. She recently conferred with the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance and New York State Mental Health Central Offices and the challenges they face in Orange County. It was clearly stipulated that anything funded through Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) is intended to be a Housing First Model. Recent affordable housing options have required background checks and income requirements connected to them which has not shifted the current population into permanent housing. She would anticipate that the next awards would allow for flexibility and allow those families into the affordable housing options.

Mr. Luján asked for the timeframe in which someone can be in temporary housing. Ms. Miller replied that it has increased from six to eight months.

Ms. Miller added that in 2017, there was a change to the regulations required to house individuals that have been identified as homeless and have mental health needs, substance abuse needs and/or in need of adult protective or child protective services. They are required to house them temporarily even if they do not comply with the rules and regulations of housing.

Ms. Miller described a recent successful placement in which a very complex individual was able to be placed into permanent housing with a Housing First Model with the assistance of the various stakeholders.

Ms. Miller added that Terri Torchio, Director of Economic Independence in the Department of Social Services submitted an application to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance asking for an enhanced shelter supplement for singles. Particularly for those singles with chronic conditions that contribute to their homelessness which they have supported. Their shelter allowance for one individual as of 11/17/17 was \$229.00, for a household of two it was \$265.00 and with the enhanced allowance they will be able to provide \$650.00 toward their shelter and to potentially permanently house them. While it is currently only for 25 individuals, that is still 25 more.

Mr. Amo asked about the lack of housing versus affordable housing. Ms. Miller replied that the average cost of rent in Orange County is \$876.00 but if someone is only receiving \$265.00

toward shelter they cannot afford to rent an apartment. They need to develop units that are supplemented/reduced rental properties.

Mr. Luján agrees that Orange County does not have affordable housing but how can they save money for the county, address the issue of permanent housing and ensure that people are not being evicted from their homes. In his opinion, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley could help with saving the county money and ensure that people are not losing their housing.

Ms. Miller replied that Legal Services of the Hudson Valley meets with them on a regular basis and they have met with the Housing Resource Center. The greatest way to reduce their homelessness numbers is by preventing people from becoming homeless. A survey was distributed to all their housing providers asking for information on what they provide, any additional funds they publicly have available and how those funds are accessed. If someone has an issue and their home is being condemned due to repairs that the landlord is not doing could they tap into some of these funds to do that repair and prevent them from being evicted. The HUD funds that come in for Rapid Rehousing are through Project Life and by improving communication when Legal Services of the Hudson Valley is notified of someone's risk of eviction they could reach out to the Department of Social Services to assist in preventing the eviction.

Mr. Amo asked how that would be measured. Ms. Miller replied that they would see a reduction in their homeless numbers.

Mr. Amo asked how they could think outside the box and would there be another way to do this without tapping the government because eventually those funds will dry up. Ms. Miller replied that these funds are going toward temporary housing but if they look at their hotel/motel families, it costs approximately \$25,000.00 per family, per year for hotel/motel emergency housing.

Mr. Anagnostakis noted that Ms. Miller stated that the average rent was \$876.00 per month.

Ms. Miller added that most of the funds are federal and state funds and they have no authority over how those funds come to them. It cost \$13,000.00 per year to supply a rent stipend that would pay 70% of the rent and allow people to be permanently housed.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked about the other 30%. Ms. Miller replied that they receive \$13,900.00 per supportive housing apartment with 70% contributed toward rent with the individual contributing the other 30% and a Case Manager that is also supported.

Mr. Anagnostakis pointed out that the \$13,900.00 is more than the open market rate of the \$876.00 average rent and in his opinion, \$876.00 is low.

Ms. Miller explained that the \$876.00 is based on a one bedroom but if they have a large family more than a one bedroom would be needed at a higher cost.

Ms. Miller suggested that they consider a pilot that would use supportive apartment models and use those federal and state funds for that pilot. She has been advised that they would be looking into it and get back to her.

Ms. Miller addressed county costs with respect to emergency housing placements. The temporary housing costs for these individuals and families are very high and when they are nonfederal contributing it is 71% county taxation. She has spoken to the County Executive's office about using their county funds differently because they are mandated to house these individual and are mandated at the 71% when the population meets specific criteria.

Mr. Anagnostakis asked for the average duration for a family in a hotel/motel. Ms. Miller replied that she did not have the information with her, but she would have it sent to the committee.

Mr. Amo suggested that the committee submit any further questions to either himself or Clerk Ramppen so that any questions can be answered at next month's meeting.

Mr. Craner addressed the BICS Payments by Selected Payment types for the periods of January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016 and January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. He explained the cost based on that case types in Temporary Residence in Hotels and Motels and Emergency Shelter and by vendor. In 2016, \$4,612,789.44 was dispersed for Temporary Residence in Hotel and Motels by case type, \$298,513.89 for Emergency Shelter payments for a total of \$4,911,303.33 and re-occurring shelter payments for permanent of \$6,830,528.98. In 2017, \$4,764,863.56 was dispersed for Temporary Residence in Hotel and Motels by case type, \$373,958.91 for Emergency Shelter payments for a total of \$5,138,822.47 and re-occurring shelter payments for permanent of \$5,768,566.20. Certain case types have higher rates with the 11 and 12 case types federally funded programs and the 16,17 and 18 case types with a higher local percentage.

Mr. Luján suggested that the Legal Services of the Hudson Valley come to the committee meeting next month for a presentation. In his opinion, the county could save money by partnering with them.

Ms. Miller stated that there are many stakeholders involved in their homeless needs with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley being one of many.

Ms. Sutherland commented that over the last few months she was able to visit various organization including HONOR and RECAP and tour their facilities and it would behoove them to have each one come before the committee for a presentation to explain the services they offer.

Mr. Amo agreed with Ms. Sutherland however, he would recommend a "lunch and learn" as opposed to having it come before the committee.

Mr. Amo asked if there was one area they needed to direct all their energy too. Ms. Miller replied affordable and/or supplemented housing.

Mr. Luján pointed out that advocacy is something that could be done now.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.