

## MINUTES

### HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Monday, January 3, 2022 11:07 a.m.**

Present: Supervisors Groat, Bender and Brady, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Director of Mental Health Jim Haitz, Deputy Director of Mental Health Ed Hunt, Nursing Home Comptroller Barbara Keefe, Public Health Director Diane Devlin, Deputy Director Kerry VanAuken and Public Health Principal Account Clerk Heather Loucks. Supervisors Robusto and Eygnor were not present for the meeting.

Minutes from the December 5<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting were approved as written.

Supervisor Brady was introduced to Department Heads.

Mr. Haitz presented the monthly financial report for the Mental Health Department. Through November the Department had actual revenues of \$9.2 million and expenses of \$7.5 million, reflecting a positive balance of \$1.7 million. There are anticipated savings in personnel lines due to unfilled positions in 2021. Mr. Haitz noted December will be a heavier expense month, as there are three payrolls.

Mr. Haitz informed Supervisors the Mental Health Department has temporally paused accepting new referrals for children and adolescents. This is the result of workforce shortages, existing high caseloads, and an increase in new referrals of children. Services will continue to those children who are currently being served by the Department. At this time, each Therapist in the Department has a caseload between 140-150; this is very high. In the first 11 months of 2021 the Department received 1,432 new referrals for adult services, 1,013 for children and adolescent services, 1,242 for Open Access Center services and 105 Court system services. Mr. Haitz said the pause is needed to get the children and adolescent caseload under control. The Department will continue to accept referrals from emergency rooms, hospitals and those youth stepping down from higher levels of care. The status of this pause will be reviewed on a continuous basis.

Mr. Haitz reviewed a system of care initiative program started several years ago by some County Departments and outside agencies that serve mutual clientele; the group is no longer active. Funding is available through the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) to expand or implement a Systems of Care approach with other cross-systems partners to support children, youth, young adults and their families. Mr. Haitz said several County departments have been meeting weekly over the past few months to address high risk youth cases involving multiple departments. OMH awarded the Wayne County Mental Health Department \$25,000 to establish a "Systems of Care" team. Director Haitz will work closely with DSS Commissioner Ellen Wayne to re-establish and expand the group that would continue to address the most difficult cases and improve the coordination of access to care for children, youth, and young adults.

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The monthly financial report for the Nursing Home was distributed with the agenda. Ms. Keefe noted revenues through November 2021 were \$16.1 million with expenses at \$17.9 million. The majority of loss is for additional interest and principal bond payments made during the year. The Nursing Home had a cash balance as of 11/31/21 of \$24.2 million and short term investments totaling \$18.5 million.

Ms. Keefe stated there are 75 open positions at the Nursing Home, 40 of this number are Aide positions. The Facility continues to hire. Supervisor Groat questioned if anyone on the local or State level is addressing staffing concerns in the medical field. He questioned if interns can be paid for or if there is a way to financially assist with educational costs. It was noted, the County has a tuition reimbursement program, but it only pays up to \$2,000 a year. Both Ms. Keefe, Mr. Haitz and Mrs. Devlin stated the hirer rate for medical positions is very low in the County and benefits are not what they use to be. It was also noted many private businesses offer sign-up bonuses. Mr. Groat questioned if the County should appoint a sub-committee to look into better means of recruitment for the County. After a brief discussion, it was agreed Mr. House would work to have a group organized to review this issue.

The year-to-date Nursing Home occupancy rate is 90.1%; this is below last year, but still well above other area nursing homes due to COVID-19. The State had staffing requirements for nursing homes that were to go in place in 2022; however, the Governor suspended these requirements for the time being.

The following transmittals were presented for the Public Health Department:

--Authorization for the Public Health Professional Advisory Committee to approved all of Wayne County Public Health manuals through 2022, with updates reviewed by the Health and Medical Services Committee. Approved 3-0.

--Authorization to amend the 2022 budget for receipt of ELC (school)/COVID-19 funding in the amount of \$724,485. At least 85% of the funds must be allocated to support school districts. The money will provide funding for re-opening schools with expanding testing capability. Approved 3-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Health Research Institute (HRI) to receive New York State Public Health Corps Fellowship Program funding in the amount of \$1,383,824 and amend the 2022 budget. Mrs. Devlin noted this contract was received at the end of last week and needs signing this month. The desire for the Public Health Department to apply for these funds was discussed at past Committee meetings. Individuals hired through this fellowship program will be hired through the S2AY Rural Health Network, a separate contract with be needed for their services. Funding will allow for up to nine Fellows and one Local Coordinator to be hired. Approved 3-0.

Mrs. Devlin updated Supervisors on COVID-19 in Wayne County. The seven-day positivity rate in Wayne County on December 29<sup>th</sup> was 9.9%, as of this morning the number increased to 12.9%.

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Community transmission in the County is high. At this time there over 1,120 cases are being monitored, 74% of these cases are from the Omicron variant. There are 34 individuals in the hospital; the overwhelming majority are un or under vaccinated, elderly and/or have co-morbidity issues. Results of home COVID tests are being accepted through the Public Health portal. Through the end of 2021 there were 111 COVID related deaths of County residents.

Mrs. VanAuken stated the walk-in clinic at Public Health continues to be offered every Wednesday from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. with all three vaccination/booster brands being offered. (A separate e-mail was sent to Supervisors with a link to register for the clinic.) Efforts are underway to have an increase in the number of 5-12 year olds vaccinated. The Omicron virus is highly infectious and shows symptoms within days of exposure; however, generally resolves itself within days. Mr. Groat questioned the number of flu cases in the County. Mrs. Devlin reported both A and B strain flu are being seen in the County on a limited scale.

Ms. Loucks updated the Committee on finances in relation to response for the pandemic. Overtime costs through the end of 2021 were \$174,606, the majority of overtime expenses are paid for with grant funds. The Public Health Department has expended 100% of their COVID-19 Emergency and COVID/FLU Response funds. Funding is still being accessed through the ELC School COVID-19 contact tracing, ELC School Reopening and Response and COVID/VAC Response Grants. Ms. Loucks stated over 19,000 COVID vaccinations were billed for in 2021 and billing will continue in 2022. She noted, when the local Public Health Department gets additional revenue they do not get as much in State Aid.

Mrs. Devlin reported the State sent test kits to schools to allow for testing prior to schools re-opening from the holiday; however, those kits were not received in time for re-opening after the holiday break in Wayne County. Each school district will develop a plan on how testing of students/staff is to be performed. The County put in a request for mask from the State; the number received was greatly reduced from the number requested. Mrs. Devlin believes small shipments of both masks and test kits will continue; however, she does not know the date or amount to be received.

Mrs. Devlin informed the Committee the Governor announced last week that funding is available through the State Department of Health to counties to help with costs associated with administering vaccines and boosters and enforcing the mask or vaccine mandate for indoor public places. Up to \$1 million will be available to make residents understand the importance of following the new requirements and enforcement of wearing a protective face covering. Although the County will not have police making arrests for non-mask wearers, there is a system in place to educate the public and those not wearing mask on the need to do so. Mrs. Devlin noted this application is due to the State Health Department by Friday. Mr. House said he would file this application on behalf of the County.

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Mr. House reiterated the Federal standard for businesses with over 100 employees to have all staff vaccinated or a system in place for weekly testing of non-vaccinated employees. Mrs. Devlin said the Public Health Department does not have time or staff available to test County employees.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m. The next meeting of the Health and Medical Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m.