

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

APRIL 6, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Committee members: Leslie Church, Ed Bronson, Terry Button, Carlie Chilson, Dick Harper, and Bonnie Percy was absent.

Others present: Pat Killen, Tim Cutler, Earle Gleason, Dan Banach, Bill Holgate, Jim Multer, Rick Willson, Doug Paddock, Phil Rouin, Zach Housworth, Amy Miller, Deb Minor, Nonie Flynn, Connie Hayes.

Leslie and Dick will do the audit this month

Minutes of the March meeting were approved as presented.

Chairman Paddock and Leslie Church thanked Deb, Sara and the Public Health staff for doing an excellent job addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and commended them for doing such a great job.

OFFICE FOR THE AGING: Zachary Housworth

Zach reported most of the staff are working from home. Four staff members have to stop by the office for a few hours each week to voucher payments, deposit contributions, etc. All home visits have been postponed and staff are following up by phone, zoom and skype.

Zach explained that while staff are working from home they could possibly be temporarily reassigned to specific tasks examples include, assisting at the Dundee Mobile Food Pantry, Packing Boxes at the Hope Center, or delivering Home Delivered Meals.

Zach reported the only transportation being provided currently is to medical appointments and pharmacies. OFA can deliver food from any store or pantry offering a pickup service, directly to any Yates County Senior.

Nonie reported that Foodlink had contacted her regarding an emergency food drive distribution. Zach explained that Foodlink is putting together boxes which have approximately 36 meals in them. They will be bringing down two trucks and the first drive through will be Wednesday, April 8th from 11:00 to 1:00 at the Town of Starkey Barns. The second one will be April 16th from 11:00 to 1:00 at the firemen's field. Individuals have to pre-register. Information is in the press release or individuals can call Social Services at 315-536-5183.

VETERANS: Philip Rouin

Phil reported the office remains open with limited staff - one staff member in the office and one remotely working offsite. During the period of COVID-19 and social distancing, our VSA has implemented multiple processes to allow submission of claims or other forms. Veterans, family members, and surviving dependents can work with a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) to submit claims electronically, via fax or by mail.

Veterans, family members and surviving dependents, can start the claims process while practicing social distancing through several methods. They may:

- Call our VSA, (315) 536-5196, conduct an over the phone interview with a VSO
- Our VSA will schedule face-to-face appointment for final signature, if required;
- File a claim online at <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/> or <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>;
- Fax a claim to VA's Centralized Mail hub at (844) 531-7818

- Submit completed applications by paper mail.

For individuals who need more assistance, VSA offers robust resources through the National Call Center (NCC) at 1-800-827-1000. Services include:

Phil reported with the VA New York Regional Offices (NYRO) being closed to the public and employees. NYRO employees are setup to work remotely and their ability to process claims will not be significantly impacted during this time.

Phil reported for Healthcare at the Bath VAMC, Canandaigua VAMC and the Rochester VA Outpatient clinics some processes have changed. The Canandaigua VA Medical Center have locked the East Street/Chapel Street gate and the back gate. People need to enter through the Fort Hill Avenue entrance. For all other facilities the following applies:

- No elective procedures being presently. Dental service have been significantly reduced.
- Primary Care services are available, but reduced where possible. Video and phone in appointments are being encouraged (e.g. Telehealth and VA Video Connect). Veterans who are young and healthy are being advised their appointments may be postponed.

Phil reported there were 302 services provided and 15 veterans transported to medical appointments for the month of March.

Phil reviewed upcoming Veteran related events and the claims settled.

PUBLIC DEFENDER: Steve Hampsey

Steve could not attend but he submitted a written report which showed there were 67 active cases at the end of March.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL: Dianne Lovejoy

Dianne could not attend the meeting but she submitted a written report which showed there were 417 active cases at the end of March.

CONFLICT DEFENDER: Tiffany Sorgen

Tiffany could not attend the meeting but she submitted a written report which showed there were 27 active cases at the end of March.

SOCIAL SERVICES: Amy Miller

Amy updated the Committee on how her department is continuing to assist the public with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Amy reported there are currently 78 people on unemployment who live in Yates County. Amy explained that a Department of Labor spokesperson stated that the department is averaging 250,000 logins a day to its website for filing unemployment claims. On average, the department receives 10,000 calls a day, but is now getting 159,000 calls a day.

Amy reviewed the follow information regarding program requirements:

Medicaid

New enrollments-New York will make a Special Enrollment Period available to New Yorkers during which eligible individuals will be able to enroll in insurance coverage. Attestation will be allowed for all factors of eligibility, including nursing home cases.

Continued eligibility- Based on the federal legislation signed into law on Wednesday, March 18,

2020, no person who currently has Medicaid coverage will lose their coverage during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Medicaid-All active cases with coverage and dates in March, April, May and June will be extended. Excess resource cases clocking down will be extended for six months. Separate determination cases will be automatically renewed, these are cases for people who used to be in SSI or Temporary Assistance.

Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance, HEAP

Districts must have staff available during core business hours to address and meet the needs of individuals and families who are applying for or receiving benefits and/or assistance through TA, SNAP, HEAP and Child Support services, regardless of county-wide mandates to close county government offices. Per 10-INF-22, districts are not allowed to limit the days of the week or times of the day that a person can apply for assistance.

New Enrollments-OTDA is waiving all in person HEAP, Temporary Assistance (TA) and Food Stamp (SNAP) eligibility and recertification interviews, this work will be done by phone. Notices are being sent to clients explaining this information. Districts may and are encouraged to suspend or defer any non-essential face-to-face contacts or appointments including orientation, employment assessments, and work activities for TA and SNAP applicants and recipients until May 15, 2020.

Continued eligibility-Districts with local procedures such as a call-in process or a process that requires frequent contact with individuals experiencing homelessness and residing in emergency housing may conduct these contacts via phone, reduce frequency, or suspend them through May 15, 2020. New York State will run mass three-month extensions of certification for SNAP-only, SNAP/TA and SNAP/TA/MA cases that were due to expire at the end of March, April and May 2020.

When processing overpayments for Food Stamps, for the duration of the COVID-19 public health crisis, at their discretion, districts can elect to raise the claims collection threshold to \$500 on active SNAP cases.

All fair hearings for eligibility programs have been adjusted to allow the client to participate by phone or video.

ABAWD requirements are currently waived, with no negative action on the cases.

Though the temperature is rising, we continue to waive normal homeless housing requirements, as to not allow people to be homeless during this time. We are keeping track of these costs separately.

Childcare

The department has requested and been approved for a waiver allowing payment to childcare providers for absences due to the pandemic.

Child Support

We continue to encourage clients to pay online or by mail when possible. We have posted signs in the COB lobby. The state is making available online forms to seek consideration of relief, including requests for a desk review.

Adult Protective Services

A number of our cases reside in-long term care and/or assisted living facilities where visitation is restricted. We are working with program staff to ensure that client needs are being met. The Office of Children and Family Services has issued guidelines for determining how to safely conduct home visits and we are doing what we can by phone.

Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program modifications have been put in place including waiving the following in person requirements: for assessments for the initial doctors' orders, for nurses to provide the Community Health Assessment, and six-month monitoring visits for DSS staff. The Department of Health is also suspending the annual renewal of health assessments, immunizations and TB tests for current in-home assistants.

Children's Services

The requirement for in-person casework contacts for foster care cases has been waived, we are using other methods to reach out to those families. The contact requirement for other open preventive cases has not been waived. The guidance is that we ask the questions recommended by the CDC, and if the answer to any of those questions is yes, we can substitute technology for an in-person visit.

For Child Protective hotline calls, OCFS has only offered safety related guidance. Workers continue to visit homes as deemed necessary. They have also provided guidance for removals of children who have tested positive.

Family Court

Court filings have been limited to essential matters.

All orders of protection can be extended by order of the court for 90 days, our judge is requiring us to submit requests for those extension.

All court dates that were scheduled between March 18 and May 15 have been rescheduled.

Amy reviewed the following resolutions that would be needed. The Committee approved.

- Amend resolution 366-19
- Workforce Development Budget Allocation
- Foster care rate changes

PUBLIC HEALTH: Deb Minor

Deb reviewed the following resolution that would be needed. The Committee approved.

- Authorize agreement with HRI 3/5/20-3/15/21 \$567, 490

Deb updated the Committee on COVID-19. Deb explained as of this date there have been 78 tests done of those 76 were negative and 2 have been positive. One individual has recovered and 5 are currently in quarantine. Deb stated it doesn't seem in Western NY that we have reached the peak yet. However, in the Governor's press conference today he stated that he is hopeful that we have reached a plateau but we still need to practice social distancing and non-essential workers need to stay home. Otherwise all efforts could be circling in the other direction.

Doug reported he circulated a resolution from Essex County regarding the taking of upstate ventilators. Since that time the Governor has clarified that is 20% of unused ventilators and the Nation Guard is used only for transportation not for thieving the equipment. I have asked Connie to monitor how this goes through the Essex County Board of Supervisors, as their meeting is today. While we certainly want to look out for our citizens, there are only 2 ventilators in the County and what happens if we need a third. Our model is to use outside resources such as Monroe County,

Chemung County and others if we need additional support but you have to be very careful about being too parochial. The consensus of the Committee was to hold off on this at this time.

COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Deb reviewed the following resolution that would be needed. The Committee approved.

- Appointments to Community Services Board

Deb reported for the SAFE Act, there were 3 reports received and investigated, and none were reported to DCJS.

Program updates were given on the following:

Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yates: Discussions with the Living Well continue along with invitations for more community involvement and commitment.

Systems of Care: The committee meeting that was scheduled for March 20th was cancelled. Plans to have a virtual meeting in April are underway.

Crisis Intervention Training: The group meeting was cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. The current efforts become more important given the vulnerability to the community's special populations and to the unprecedented potential for community member response to the generated fear and concern.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Developmental Disability Services: The current restrictions have a tremendous effect on mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability services in Yates County. The department reached out to all service providers to determine operation plans, vulnerabilities noted concerns, and patterns of care changes and to establish a reporting process to keep the county informed and allow for feedback to the regional authority and the state offices. The crisis and emergency services remain open and include the Soldiers & Sailors Emergency Department (with no call mental health), Clifton Springs Hospital Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program: with evaluation, holding beds, inpatient beds and mobile crisis services along with life line 911 for calls and referrals. Substance Abuse emergency services include the CODI team with 24 hour response to individual need, support in the jail and linkage with higher level services. The access center is also available 24/7 and both programs are supported with mobile van services.

CHASE Research Grant: Grant activities continue regarding staff recruitment. Surveys and interviews continue with advisory committee for the grant.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR: Nonie Flynn

Nonie reported that the Foodlink request was reviewed under Office for the Aging and thanked Zack and Amy for stepping up and handling this.

Nonie reviewed the project status report as it relates to Human Services.

Meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.