

## MINUTES

### HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Monday, May 1, 2023 10:00 a.m.**

Present: Supervisors Robusto, Groat, Brady, Miller, Johnson, Leonard, Chatfield, Donalty, Verno and Eygnor, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Mental Health Director Jim Haitz, Nursing Home Administrator Jeffrey Stalker, Deputy Health Services Director Heather Loucks, Public Health Director Diane Devlin, Treasurer Patrick Schmitt, Social Services Commissioner Lisa Graf and County Auditor Kristin Scott. Supervisor Bender was not present for the meeting.

Minutes from the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee meeting were approved as written.

Mr. Haitz reviewed the performance report for the Mental Health Department. Through March the Department received revenue of \$3.3 million, had expenses of \$2.3 million, resulting in revenue in excess of expenses of slightly over \$1 million in the first quarter of the year. Both the Building and Grounds Maintenance, IT and telephone fees have been paid in full for the year.

Mr. Haitz gave a brief power point presentation on the County's Opioid Task Force. A recent report showed more resident from east and southeast Wayne County are admitted to the State Office of Addiction Services and Support (OASAS) programs than other parts of the County. The number of newborns with neonatal withdrawal symptoms and/or affected by material use of drugs is higher in Wayne County than the rest of the State, with nearly 18 cases per 1,000 births. A map showed areas in the County with the highest overdose rate. In 2022, there were 55 reported overdoses in Wayne County and 13 death, so far in 2023 there have been 23 overdoses and six deaths. Mr. Haitz showed a naloxone wall box he is proposing be placed in all County buildings and other public areas around the County for emergency overdoses and public available narcan. Other counties in the State have these boxes in place. Mr. Haitz said the program would be paid for with grant funds. He reviewed the importance of every municipal building having at least one box and every County building having at least one box located near their AED equipment. The County received hundreds of thousands of dollars in State Opioid Settlement monies; some of the funds will be used for this purchase. At this time, narcan is available at no cost through the County's Public and Mental Health Departments. Mrs. Devlin said her staff would take the responsibility of making sure the naloxone boxes remain full. Mr. Brady questioned if opioid settlement funds could be used for law enforcement; Mr. Haitz said he did not believe this to be a qualified expense. Funds are to be used for recovery, treatment and prevention programs. Committee members supported the purchase of naloxone boxes.

Mrs. Devlin reviewed the monthly activities report for the Public Health Department:

- There were four adults and 15 children immunized during the month, no reports of youth with elevated blood lead levels were reported and there is one active TB case in the County. There were 37 reports of communicable disease during the month.
- Rabies: There were 12 dog and six cat bites in April; three specimens tested positive.

- COVID: Through April 25<sup>th</sup> Wayne County reported 28,894 cases of COVID and 184 related deaths. Community transmission in the County is moderate and community risk low. Starting in July, COVID immunization clinics will be held during regular clinics hours on Wednesday afternoons at the Public Health Building. If test kits distributed at the beginning of the pandemic are still good to use was questioned. Mrs. Devlin said the government has extended the dates of the units. If you test positive on a home test kit you should have a lab test performed for verification. If you test negative with a home test kit, yet feel ill, you should have a lab test performed.
- Public Health Education: Five child car seat inspections took place and four seats were distributed. The NOT smoking program in Pal-Mac High School concluded on April 19<sup>th</sup>. INDEPTH sessions continue at the Marion and Pal-Mac Middle Schools and Williamson High School. Five bicycle helmets were distributed during April.
- Cannabis: The Cannabis Control Board added 99 conditional adult-retail dispensary licenses at their last meeting. Currently there are nine operational retail dispensaries in the State. No dispensaries have been approved in Wayne County. Licenses have been granted in the Finger Lakes Region. Mrs. Devlin noted municipalities would be given the opportunity to let their feelings be known to the State about illegal operating dispensaries if the owners seek a license; as this would require municipal input. The Governor is hoping to have legislation passed that would give enforcement authority to the Cannabis Management Board. Mr. Robusto questioned why illegal dispensaries are being closed in surrounding municipalities, but not in Wayne County. Mr. House said the issue will be discussed with Sheriff Milby at tomorrow's Public Safety Committee meeting. Mrs. Devlin said a public information campaign will be offered through her Department's website and Facebook page regarding cannabis use.

A transmittal was presented requesting authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Health Research Inc. and the Public Health Department to receive \$129,427. Mrs. Devlin noted this amount will be received for each of the next five years from the State to strengthen public health infrastructure, workforce and data systems. Approved 4-0.

Mr. Stalker reviewed staffing at the Nursing Home. He noted the Facility dropped from a Medicaid four-star rating to three stars in staffing. Efforts continue to fill over 90 vacant positions the majority being full-time Certified Nursing Assistants. The employee two-year retention rate at the Facility is 32%. The number of full-time vacancies rose sharply around June/July of 2021. A report was presented on the reasons staff left employment. Mr. Stalker said the Facility has put in place employee retention events; however, the number of applications being received remains low. The State staffing mandate for nursing homes has put a great deal of financial stress on those facilities that are adhering to it. The County's Nursing Home has 192 beds; however, in following State staffing mandates, can have no more than 140 residents, and additional residents cannot be placed in the County Nursing Home until there are adequate staff to care for them. The Health Care Worker Retention Bonus was submitted for 32 employees. Mr. Stalker noted Wayne County Nursing Home has the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest Medicaid rate in the State. Supervisors

questioned how the Facility's Medicaid rate can be increased. Mrs. Loucks said the last time the Facility's rate was set was after construction; it is difficult to get the State to perform a rate review unless there is new construction or new ownership.

Mr. Stalker said Sodexo services are improving. Annual expectations for the vendor were reviewed at a meeting held in April to insure performance of contracted duties. Meetings between Nursing Home Administration and Sodexo representatives will continue.

A letter written by the Accounting Firm Bonadio & Co. noted the financial and operational challenges many nursing homes are experiencing. The overwhelming majority of Nursing Homes in Upstate New York reported a negative operating margin in 2022, with the average loss per facility at \$2.2 million. Mrs. Loucks noted the Facility received Inter Government Transfer (IGT) funds for many years, funding only given to public facilities. An IGT payment has not been issued to the County since February 2022. After financial difficulties at the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022, Nursing Home Administration worked with County Administration on a corrective action plan for their billing practices. The billing department will continue to pursue claiming from the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022; these claims can be pursued for up to two years, however they have to be processed by hand, not electronically. Mr. Stalker questioned if Supervisors want the Facility to continue to comply with State staffing mandates, or seek higher revenues by adding residents. He noted all employees that worked in the Facility's billing office during the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 are no longer there; new staff have received training on both Medicaid and Medicare billing.

Mrs. Loucks stated Medicaid never pays 100% of claims; the current Medicaid rate for the County's Nursing Home is about \$188 a day, substantially lower than rates paid through Medicaid A and private-pay. At the recommendation of the Facility's external auditors the Nursing Home will make a request to write off uncollectable accounts of over \$1.5 million. Ms. Scott said it is essential that a portion of accounts receivable for the Nursing Home are written off, as the County does not expect to receive these funds. Mr. Stalker said safety nets are in place so this financial error does not occur again.

If the County's Nursing Home is viable without IGT funding was questioned. Mr. Stalker said the only way the Facility could be fiscally viable would be if every resident was subsidized through Medicaid A or private pay. He noted the County already pays a portion of Medicaid costs; it seems to make more sense to put these funds into the County Facility than a private facility. Mrs. Graf noted the process of Medicaid claims is not an easy one; and payments are not made immediately.

Mr. House questioned if a 'soft' billing system is being used for accounts receivable at the Nursing Home and if this is the same type of system that should be used for the Countywide emergency ambulance service. Supervisors said a 'hard' billing system usually gets better results. Mrs.

**PAGE 4**

Loucks said 12 residents at the Nursing Home had their nursing home debt sent to a formal collector. Ms. Scott stated the need for the County to have a formal accounts receivable policy when it comes to collecting debt and written off uncollectable debt.

The financial report for the Nursing Home was reviewed. The Facility had revenue of \$3.6 million through March 3<sup>rd</sup> and expenses of \$5.1 million. The Facility has a cash balance \$6.3 million and \$24.5 million in short-term investments.

Mrs. Loucks said the Sheriff's Office requested additional services for the County Jail through their meal contract with Sodexo. She requested these changes be put in a memorandum of understanding in writing so they are clear to both parties.

Mr. Stalker reviewed projects included for the Nursing Home in the County's 2023-2028 Capital Plan. In 2024, the purchase of a new Wanderguard System, updating resident dining rooms and resident bathroom sinks. Mr. Stalker stated the need to improve the dining experience for residents. In 2025, \$300,000 to replace windows on the north end of the Nursing Home, \$100,000 to replace sliding entrance door and \$125,000 to improve resident dining rooms. The windows in the facility are no longer efficient. In 2026, \$300,000 to replace carpet, tile and linoleum flooring, \$300,000 to replace widows on the south end of the building and \$125,000 for improvements to resident dining rooms. Mr. Stalker noted about 70% of capital plan project costs are reimbursed through Medicaid.

The following transmittals were presented for the Nursing Home:

--Authorization to approve paying \$7,498 for emergency repair work due to a leak in the Nursing Homes cooling system. The County Administrator approved the urgent repair. The cost will come from the County's Contingency Fund. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization to abolish the position of Telephone Operator, create, and fill the position of Receptionist. Mr. Stalker noted the individual in the Telephone Operator position is retiring in June. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization to write-off uncollectable accounts for the Nursing Home totaling \$1,558,223. Mr. Stalker said collection efforts have been exhausted on these accounts. The request covers 2019-2022. The error with Medicaid billing at the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 was very costly to the Facility. The external auditor made the recommendation for this action, as these funds do not appear to be collectable. Ms. Scott said the high amount of accounts receivable on the Facility's books needs to be corrected, since there is not reasonable expectation they will be received, the correct financial position of the Facility should be portrayed. Approved 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m. The next meeting of the Health and Medical Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.