

MINUTES

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, July 5, 2022 11:30 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Robusto, 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 Administrator Jeffrey Stalker, Nursing Home Comptroller Barbara Keefe, Public Health Director Diane Devlin, Deputy Director Kerry VanAuken, Supervisor of Children with Special Needs Lisa Odell and Public Health Principal Account Clerk Heather Loucks. Supervisor Miller was not present for the meeting.

Minutes from the June 6th Committee meeting were approved as written.

Ms. Keefe reviewed the financial status of the Nursing Home. Through May the Facility had revenue of \$6.7 million and expenses of \$7.18 million. They have a cash balance of \$13 million. Ms. Keefe noted cash accounts decreased in May reflecting the Facility's payoff of their bond; the Facility is now debt free. The year-to-date occupancy rate of the Nursing Home is 86%.; this is down from last year at the same time when the rate of 90.1%. Mr. Stalker stated the lower census is reflective of State staffing mandates. Mr. Groat questioned if the State is enforcing staffing mandates. Mr. Stalker noted LeadingAge is pursuing a lawsuit against the State regarding the issue, but as long as it is State law he will enforce staffing mandates. With current staff the Nursing Home can have 155-160 residents. Ms. Keefe stated current Medicaid billing is being filed in a timely basis. A formal appeal was filed with the State Department of Health regarding Medicaid billings from December and January for approximately \$1.2 million. She said LeadingAge is assisting the County in resolving this issue. The County has two years to appeal the State for these funds. There were no new admissions to the Facility during May due to the reducing the Facility's census to comply with the staffing mandate. The Nursing Home has an overall Medicare 5-Star rating of 3-Stars.

At the end of June the Facility had 66 open positions, the majority being nurses. The employee two-year retention rate is 54%. Mr. Stalker reviewed recruiting efforts and ways to retain staff. The position of Deputy Comptroller for the Facility has been filled.

Mr. Stalker presented a transmittal requesting authorization to allow out-of-title pay for a Registered Nurse Supervisor who is currently filling in as the Director of Nursing. A 10% pay increase during the time the staff member serves in this capacity is being requested. Approved 4-0.

The monthly financial report for the Mental Health Department was reviewed. Through April the Department received revenue of \$4.8 million and had expenses of \$3.58 million. Mr. Haitz stated the Department has had a very strong first six months of the year. The report listed revenue in excess of expenses for the past seven years totaling over \$6 million.

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Mrs. O'Dell discussed with Supervisors her concerns in providing State mandated services to children in the Early Intervention (EI) Program. The State has performance goals and timelines for completing evaluations on children and having their services in place. Due to limited service providers, evaluations are not taking place within the 45-day timeline and services are being delayed, in some instances, up to six months. If children are found eligible for EI services, it can be extremely difficult to find a provider (speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy or special education teacher) to work with the child.

The lack of providers is mainly due to low reimbursement rates, which are set by the State. These rates have not increased in 20 years. Providers must be approved and contract directly with the State, which is not an easy process and providers are regularly audited to ensure they are meeting State guidelines and regulations. Providers must have written policies and procedures, health and safety plans, carry their own liability insurance, do their own billing and work with insurance companies to secure reimbursement for services. It is not an easy or user-friendly system. The result has been providers leaving the County's EI program and working for school districts, hospitals, or solely in the County's Pre-K Program where reimbursement rates are significantly higher and program requirements are less.

Early Intervention simply does not have enough providers to meet the program's needs. In 2019 a Requests for Proposals (RfP) were released to help increase services for EI children. Roosevelt Children's Center was awarded the RfP, but due to COVID (the center temporarily shut down for several weeks) and lack of ability to recruit and retain necessary providers, the goal of the RfP was not met. Prior to the RfP, Roosevelt was considering stopping services to the Early Intervention Program because they were losing money by accepting the State rates. They would continue to offer programs to children in the County's Pre-K Program, as the rates paid to these providers are higher. Paying mandated State rates will not allow Wayne County to compete with outside agencies/schools for service providers. Mrs. O'Dell said Roosevelt Children's Center has agreed to extend their contract for EI services through the end of 2022; the contract should have ended this August.

Requirements to be a service provider were reviewed. Mr. House questioned if there could be a shared services program in conjunction with programs school district offer; Mrs. O'Dell noted the Early Intervention Program is for children who are birth to two years old and not yet in school. The County has between 235 and 260 children in their EI program; currently there are about 20 children on a waiting list for services. Mr. Robusto questioned what action the County could take to make the State aware of the need to increase provider rates. Mrs. O'Dell said the State is aware of this issue through letters and calls received. He noted the need for such programs to start youth out on a good path. Mr. Groat questioned how other counties were handling the issue. Mrs. O'Dell said smaller counties do not have as big of a problem with finding providers, but Monroe County has hundreds of children that remain on waiting lists because of the lack of service providers. Mrs. O'Dell noted all agencies are losing service providers. If the County should consider having a direct contract with full-time service providers to meet the needs of the

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Early Intervention Program and subsidize the cost paid to providers was questioned. It was noted the County cannot have a contract for a position that could be on the regular payroll with benefits. Mrs. Devlin said it would require at least four full-time service providers on staff to provide necessary services in-house; this would need to include vehicles, as the employees would regularly drive to children's homes to provide the service. Mr. Robusto request a proposal be prepared detailing costs to have staff hired through the Public Health Office to provide these services and the cost to the County and reimbursement from the State. Supervisors questioned who performs the evaluation for services; Mrs. Devlin said all evaluation teams are State certified.

The Committee was updated on the following:

- COVID: At the end of June, Wayne County had a total of 24,328 reported cases of COVID-19. At this time the County is in a low transmission cycle. Vaccination clinics are now scheduled two times a month for people five and older. Mrs. VanAuken said a survey is going to be released to parents through electronic media, to see if they intended to have their children under the age of five vaccinated and if so, who do they plan to perform the vaccination.
- Rabies: A Rabies clinic was held in Palmyra on June 14th. At the event 158 animals were vaccinated. During June six specimens were sent for testing, one returned positive for rabies.
- Immunization: Twelve adults received immunization shots through the Public Health Office this month. The Department was made aware of 43 diseases that required investigation and were made aware of two children that were diagnosed with high lead blood levels. Mrs. Devlin noted there have been 86 cases of Monkeypox reported in New York State as of the end of June. This is generally a respiratory illness and is not as contagious as COVID-19.
- Public Health Education: A 2nd Public Health Educator was hired in June. The Department gave out 160 bike helmets at three separate events and has five individuals enrolled in the County's smoking cessation program.
- Financial: Ms. Loucks said the State is approximately 10 months behind in giving reimbursements related to COVID.

Mrs. Devlin noted Principal Account Clerk Heather Loucks will be leaving Public Health for a job at the County's Nursing Home. She will return to the Department to assist with financial matters when needed during the initial transition of staff.

The following transmittals were presented for the Public Health Department:

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Katharine Coleman for the provision of related services to the Preschool Children with Physically Handicapping Conditions Program. Approved 4-0.

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--Authorization to amend the ELC COVID-19 Reopening Schools budget to include an additional allocation of funds and extend the contract period for school districts to utilize them. An additional \$551,031 will be received by the Department that can be utilized through July 2023. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a contract with Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES for the provision of transportation services for the County's Early Intervention and Preschool Children with Physically Handicapped Conditions Program for a cost not to exceed \$1,340,000. Mrs. Devin noted the County is responsible to provide this service. Approved 4-0.

--Authorization to award the bid and for the Chairman of the Board to sign the contract for transportation of Preschool Age Children with Physically Handicapping Conditions to Transpo Bus Services LLC for a proposed cost of \$475,000. Bids were up substantially from last year. The County is mandated by the State to perform this service. Approved 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Health and Medical Services Committee is scheduled for Monday, August 1st at 10:00 a.m.