

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JUNE 6, 2007 – 3:00 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: N. Shinagawa, Chair, M. Robertson, M. Sigler, Vice Chair, M. Koplinka-Loehr (arrived 3:06)
F. Proto
Staff: A. Cole, B. Crosby, S. Connors, F. Croteau, A. Frith, Health Department; N. Zahler, S. Hess,
Youth Services, L. Holmes, D. Conte, Office for the Aging; K. Schlather, N. Burston, B.
Falcao, Human Services Coalition; S. Whicher, County Administrator; S. Martel-Moore,
Human Rights Commission, M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guest: L. Jackier, Drop-In Center; Media

Call to Order

Chair Shinagawa called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

County Administrator's Report

Tompkins Community Action

Mr. Whicher referred to previous discussions regarding Tompkins Community Action's (TCA) desire to purchase real estate next to the present Chartwell House for the purpose of reentry/SRO program use. Ms. Dillon, TCA Director will be meeting with Mr. Whicher within the next week to discuss more details. Ms. Dillon would like to have the County and City assist with the purchase and perhaps develop a balloon payment in the next few years. Mr. Whicher said he had been informed that as part of the project the present dwelling would be razed and a new multi-unit structure would be constructed. He has requested that Ms. Dillon obtain an appraisal as well as prepare as a formalized proposal prior to any final consideration.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the County's ability to assist in a proposal such as this; it was noted that various options are available if the proposal is seriously considered. Mr. Whicher will not be bringing it to the Committee for consideration until he has had the opportunity to review the proposal in its entirety.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr arrived at this time (3:06 p.m.)

Catholic Charities

Mr. Whicher referred to previous Committee discussion regarding to the current lack of adequate support and the length of time necessary to assist immigrant individuals. Subsequent to the discussion he asked Human Services Coalition to look into the matter. Catholic Charities had already been considering the possibility of this service area and has been working on a proposal. He said that although the Human Services Coalition has almost completed its review of funding recommendations he has asked that the matter be reviewed by them to see if it is fully integrated; this will be discussed further at the June 20th Committee meeting.

Chair's Report

Mr. Shinagawa did not have a report.

Office for the Aging

Health Insurance Counseling Evaluation (HIICAP)

Ms. Holmes introduced Ms. Conte, a Planner in the department, and noted she was responsible for coordinating and assisting in the compilation and preparation of the survey evaluating the program. She explained the HIICAP program exists to assist Medicare patients with questions regarding their health insurance programs. The majority of this work is done by Lifelong, subcontractor, who has ten trained

counselors; two staff persons are also available in the local Office for the Aging. Ms. Holmes indicated that prior to Medicare Part D, approximately ten calls were received in the Office for the Aging, and one hundred at Lifelong. Subsequent to the new regulations, over 1,000 calls are received annually, one-half to the Office for the Aging. She emphasized that the program is very complicated and is geared toward the most frail and vulnerable citizens in the community.

Ms. Holmes said with the advent of Medicare Advantage plans, private health and drug plans, there have recently been unscrupulous sales persons trying to sell the plans to seniors. The HIICAP program assists in reporting to the State Insurance Department and State Attorney General's office these incidents that include individuals gaining entry into seniors' homes and making seniors feel threatened. She will be on the radio as well as provide press releases about these concerns, noting that if an individual signs up for the program it takes several months and a great deal of effort to cancel the coverage.

At this time, information regarding the survey was provided. Ms. Holmes indicated a letter was sent to 107 individuals participating in the HIICAP program announcing the telephone survey was going to be undertaken, followed by telephone calls to the individuals. Of the 107, 54 participated in the actual evaluation survey. Information on how the survey was undertaken was provided as well as the results of each question on the survey. Ms. Holmes said 94% of the participants felt they were treated courteously by counselors, 89% felt the counselor was knowledgeable, and 85% said they would recommend the service to others. Ms. Holmes also noted that some negative statements, upon review, were due to clients confusing HIICAP and Medicare. Half the individuals indicated they are saving money on prescription drugs, and they were able to make educated decisions as a result of the information obtained. One recommendation from the survey was to have the volunteers receive more training so clients do not receive incorrect information; it was believed this was in part due to the new regulations and information changing rapidly. In addition, more advertising is desired as well as insuring collaboration with Mental Health and the Department of Social Services to ensure that all Medicare individuals are aware of the assistance.

Ms. Robertson inquired whether the high demand for staff time would continue. Ms. Holmes said that although not as many individuals are requiring assistance, the assistance required is becoming more complicated. She also informed the Committee that this summer all EPIC enrollees would be automatically enrolled in Medicare D. Presently, all EPIC participants will be sent a letter informing them of this change, noting that EPIC will choose a plan with a formulary best matching their present drug needs. EPIC participants do have the option of reviewing plans to make an independent choice if desired. Ms. Robertson noted that 86% of the individuals were at or below income; she inquired if they received other services. Ms. Holmes said she believes individuals coming through the office for the first time are notified of additional programs. In response to Mr. Whicher, she noted that initially thirty-seven outreach events occurred throughout the County. She indicated that at this time the need for outreach would be revisited.

Ms. Robertson asked how much estimated time and expense there was for the survey. Ms. Holmes reported the intern used approximately 8 hours per week for two semesters; Ms. Conte spent approximately 20-25 hours. Ms. Holmes noted that as part of a system implemented initially by Ms. Stein, former Director, one to two programs undergo an evaluation process every year.

It was noted that the information obtained by the survey will be shared with the State HIICAP and State Office for the Aging, who use the information for Federal funding. Ms. Holmes said she has written letters to receive funding and has been successful. She said additional funding was received to assist in startup costs; however it is not ongoing.

Lakeside Nursing Home Update

Ms. Holmes reported the New York State Department of Health has released \$550 million to be used in conjunction with request for proposals associated with expenses facilities require as a result of the Berger Commission. These funds will be on a first-come, first-served basis, therefore, funding applications are being compiled quickly. Mr. Deptula and Peregrine representatives traveled to Albany last week to obtain pertinent information regarding the funds and will be submitting an application within the next thirty days. The hope is to be able to shut down Lakeside operations and open the following day as the restructured Peregrine facility,

with 80 assisted living patients and a medical day program, thus not requiring patients to be transported elsewhere. Ms. Holmes indicated the only stumbling block was the 80 – 100 nursing home beds presently existing at Lakeside. In response to Mr. Proto's question, Ms. Holmes stated she did have knowledge of the status of the lawsuit taken up by several communities as a result of the Berger Commission closures.

Rollover Funds Request

It was **MOVED** by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Mr. Proto, to approve the request to use \$1,000 of rollover funding in 2007. A lengthy discussion followed regarding the request for 2008 of a generator for use at the Foodnet building. Questions were provided on how the rollover funds came about, noting the PERS program is able to provide revenue and that the other funds were not earmarked for any specific program. Members of the Committee expressed concern about providing the generator when the property is not County-owned. Mr. Whicher explained that at the present time the County holds the title to the property. Ms. Holmes indicated a review of the potential to wire the building to allow a portable generator was almost as expensive as a permanent installation. She also said that in the event of an emergency it would be important to protect the food supply at the building and continue to provide meals to clients.

Budget Adjustments and Transfers

Members were provided written documents. No action was required.

Health Department

WIC Program Update

Ms. Cole, Director, introduced Dr. Amy Frith, WIC Director to the Committee. Ms. Frith reviewed (MEMO BEING SENT ELECTRONICALLY).

Health and Safety Program Update

The Committee heard from Mr. Croteau that the previously proposed option of funding the shortfall of his position by providing hearing and/or fit testing to municipalities. Several smaller municipalities expressed an interest in contracting for hearing tests, however, no municipalities expressed a desire to have the County perform fit tests. Ms. Cole and Mr. Croteau indicated that at this time they have not found any other revenue sources to offset the shortfall in the personnel line of \$16,000 for 2007. For the year 2008, it was anticipated that if left at the current level of 35 hours per week, the shortfall would amount to \$18,000 as a result of contractual obligations.

In response to Mr. Koplinka-Loehr's question of an impact analysis if the hours are reduced, Mr. Croteau indicated there could be potential problems relating to OSHA mandates, continued review and updating of manufacturer safety data sheets, air quality assessments, etc. In addition, he spoke of the ability to work with employees regarding ergonomic equipment choices to avoid workers compensation claims. Mr. Croteau reiterated that since his employment in the position of Health and Safety Coordinator, the County has not received any fines for health and/or safety issues.

Mr. Proto stated his belief that the position provides a savings to the County as a result of the reduction of potential fines and lawsuits, and therefore should be viewed as a cost avoidance position. Mr. Croteau noted it is difficult to determine the total amount saved by having a pro-active approach to employee injury and work conditions. Ms. Robertson inquired whether insurance premiums would increase if the position were not funded.

Mr. Whicher said the charge to the department was to determine if there is any way to fund the deficit for the position through the use of fees for services and report to the Committee. Upon review and seeking this information they are reporting back that charging fees would not cover the deficit.

Mr. Shinagawa indicated that due to the decisions made at the Legislature relating to 2008 budgeting goals the option of reduction of hours and shifting of the administrative assistant might have to be decided upon.

Rollover Funds Request

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members, to approve the 2007 rollover fund request for the Health Department. The form indicated the rollover funds were being returned to the General Fund due to being consistently under budget since 2004.

Notification of Grant

Ms. Cole reported that Ms. Connors applied to the Rotary Club for a community grant. She was awarded the grant in the amount of \$1,000. Funds from this grant will be used to purchase approximately 80 rapid result HIV test kits. She said that her 2007 budget had included anticipated revenue from the State to purchase the kits, however, during the year the State decided not to fund the purchase of the kits.

Youth Services

Introduction

Ms. Zahler introduced Ms. Hess to the Committee. Ms. Hess had previously worked for the County and recently returned. She works with the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth and will be reporting on the topic.

Youth Board Update

Ms. Zahler reported the Youth Board budget process began in April by inviting agencies to provide an application for program funding requests. The current agencies funded by the Youth Board were the only ones that responded. She noted this is the beginning of a three-year funding cycle for the department and therefore is the time that requests would be modified from the previous three-year period. She noted the applications were received with an overall 17% increase (\$112,000) in requested funding. Programs such as the Learning Web and Big Brothers/Big Sisters would still have a waiting list. The Youth Board will now review the requests to determine funding levels for the programs. She noted that normally agencies are asked to operate a program over a three-year cycle and depending on funding ability some minor modifications could be undertaken during that period.

Recreation Partnership

Ms. Zahler reported that the original Recreation Partnership agreement ended in 2006, but was extended to provide time to propose modifications to the agreement. Subsequently, the Recreation Partnership Board has completed their work on a proposed five-year agreement, which will now go to each participating municipality for their review and approval. Although it had been hoped to present the draft agreement to the Committee today, it was not possible. The Recreation Partnership should be bringing the agreement forward after it meets tomorrow, and will then come to the Committee on June 20th. Ms. Zahler noted it is primarily the same funding formula as previously, with amendments to areas of the agreement that are no longer pertinent.

Mr. Shinagawa expressed a desire to allow adequate time to digest the document prior to acting upon it. Following discussion, it was suggested that the agreement be made available on June 20th, and hold a special Committee meeting on July 3rd to address the agreement. Mr. Shinagawa indicated he would not be available at that time. The Committee will make further determination of when to act on the matter on June 20th. Noting that the agreement may not be complete prior to budget preparation, Ms. Zahler noted she would build her budget with the estimated figure for the Recreation Partnership built in.

Rollover Funds Request

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present (Mr. Koplinka-Loehr temporarily out of room), to approve the 2007 rollover fund request for Youth Services. Ms. Zahler noted these are the funds held in trust for the Recreation Partnership.

Community Coalition for Healthy Youth

Ms. Zahler noted this is a 2004 four-year grant that provides \$100,000 per year with a \$100,000 matching grant from community services. Ms. Hess is responsible for the work, which is now in year three.

Ms. Hess reported that although Youth Services is the fiscal sponsor and coordinator of the grant, the coalition is made up of 13 departments or agencies. She spoke of how the partners work at sharing the network goal of reducing underage drinking. The central focus in the area of young people and substance abuse is drinking, as studies show alcohol is the drug of choice among high school age youth. Ms. Hess provided written material describing the three main goals of the coalition: (1) Reduce substance abuse among youth; (2) Strengthen collaboration among agencies and governments to prevent abuse; and (3) Improve school safety and student bonding to school. She shared the various strategies used to meet the goals, including survey forms, interdisciplinary projects highlighting the statistics resulting from the surveys, posters created with student artwork highlighting the findings of the surveys, and small give-away items such as pens. It was noted that at the present time the survey program is only conducted within the Ithaca City School District, however, one-half the youth in the County are based within this school district; outreach is underway with other school districts as well. The Social Norms program covers information regarding drug usage as well as social behaviors.

Ms. Hess reported that the 2005 survey results indicated that students used more than the national average of marijuana and alcohol, and less than the national average for cigarettes. The most recent survey was completed in April and the information has not been received to determine outcomes at this time. Ms. Zahler said the trend has been going downward. She indicated that student perception is such that if they were to be viewed in a negative manner they are less likely to use; this has been achieved with tobacco at this time. The department is looking into advertising, working with STOP-DWI, and other public messages to provide information. The Committee was informed of public policy changes, for example that the Grassroots Festival has specific wristbands to show underage individuals, making it easier to regulate the use of alcohol by minors.

Department of Social Services

Rollover Funds Request

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present (Mr. Proto temporarily out of room), to approve the 2007 rollover fund request for the Social Services Department. The form indicated the rollover funds were being returned to the General Fund.

Human Services Coalition

RESOLUTION NO. - URGING NEW YORK STATE SUPPORT TO ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE OF HOME HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Falcao stated the resolution is being brought forward following previous discussions of the concern of staff shortages in light of the Berger Commission. Mr. Shinagawa noted the resolution would formalize the concerns previously expressed as well as indicating the need to take a pro-active stance. Although the State has indicated its preference for long term care services within the home, there are clearly not enough trained individuals to properly ensure an appropriate level of care. Mr. Sigler asked if the Patients First program addressed the issue; Ms. Falcao said it indicated the need for home health care workers, but not how this would be achieved.

Mr. Sigler temporarily left the room.

Mr. Shinagawa said that although there are ways to locally attempt to address the situation, it is difficult to know how to initiate the changes that will assist in retention of individuals. Presently, there are not adequate benefits, salary, or assistance with transportation to/from patients. Ms. Robertson requested the accompanying memo be attached as an explanation.

Mr. Shinagawa reported upcoming hearings would be taking place throughout the state to provide consumers and consumer advocates the opportunity to address concerns. On June 20th a hearing will be held in Syracuse.

It as MOVED by Mr. Proto, seconded by Ms. Robertson.

A voice vote on the resolution resulted as follows: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Temporarily Out of Room – 1 (Legislator Sigler).

WHEREAS, the residents of Tompkins County have expressed a strong preference for long term care services in the home, and

WHEREAS, the demand for home care services in Tompkins County has risen substantially in recent years, and

WHEREAS, personal care aide services (one component of home health care) in Tompkins County rose from 99,524 hours in 2000 to more than 300,000 hours in 2006, and

WHEREAS, home care providers have reported a shortage of home health care workers with longer waiting lists and some patients only being able to receive fewer than optimal hours of service, and

WHEREAS, productivity of adult children is significantly compromised when their parents are receiving less-than-optimal care, and

WHEREAS, the older population of Tompkins County is steadily increasing, and by 2025, there will be a 14.3 percent increase in residents over age 85, the age group most likely to require long term care services, and

WHEREAS, the adopted findings of the Berger Commission’s Plan to Stabilize and Strengthen New York’s Health Care System call for additional services in the home, and

WHEREAS, Governor Spitzer’s “Patients First” Agenda to Fundamentally Reform New York’s Health Care System recognizes that with Long Term Care needs “The vast majority – our grandparents, parents, children or neighbors – want to live in their community and in their home. Yet this is another example where the demand for health care services has changed, yet the supply has remained the same”, and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court Olmstead decision of 1999 mandates providing long term care services in the least restrictive setting possible, and

WHEREAS, although overall costs of home care are often less than institutional care, home care requires more staff than providing care in a residential facility because people are dispersed in multiple settings at distances from one another, and

WHEREAS, the shortage of health care workers in all setting is projected to become exacerbated as the current workforce ages into retirement, and creating a sufficient qualified workforce requires years of coordinated effort and initiative, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature is in support of Governor Spitzer’s efforts and urges the New York State Department of Health and New York State Legislature to increase efforts and support for increasing the supply of home health care workers,

RESOLVED, further, That copies of this resolution be sent to Governor George Pataki, Governor Elect Eliott Spitzer, Senators Seward, Nozzolio, and Winner, and Assemblyperson Lifton, Health Committee Chairs Senator Kemp Hannon and Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, and New York State Association of Counties.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Budget Review

Ms. Schlather reported the Human Service Coalition budget review process is almost completed, with the final review occurring on June 22nd. During the review process there are two agencies making requests for special circumstances; she feels it was important to bring them to the Committee to understand the requests prior to recommendations.

Drop-In Children’s Center

Ms. Jackier provided a brief overview of the services provided by the Drop-In Children’s Center, which opened in the 1970’s and is primarily utilized by low-income individuals at or below 200 percent of

poverty level. In 2005 the center expanded, almost doubling the capacity. Although it received a large portion of the cost in grants, some financing was necessary. The original date to open the newly expanded facility was September 2005, however, due to construction delays it was not opened until November 2005. As a result of the delay, many clients who had originally planned to use the facility went elsewhere for their childcare needs and it resulted in a deficit. During 2006 the center was able to raise some of the lost funds, however a deficit of approximately \$25,000 still exists. At the time of construction, the contractors had indicated the delays would only be several weeks. Additional employees had been hired to provide adequate staffing for the anticipated increased enrollment; with the contractor indicating the delays were relatively short, staff was retained over this time period, resulting in an increased operating expense without additional revenue source.

Although there is a high demand for the services, with a waiting list for services, Ms. Jackier is concerned the 2007 budget will be experiencing a large deficit. As a result the fund-raising goal has been increased sixty-two percent above last year's amount of \$42,000, to a total goal of \$73,000. At this time, only one additional revenue grant from the county will be received for the balance of the year. Her request is to ask the County for an additional \$25,000 to help offset the difference.

The Committee reviewed the fee scale and staff salaries and discussed possible alternatives. It was reported by Ms. Jackier that amending the fee scales in various categories would not result in correcting the deficit. In addition, she provided information on the agency's income and expenses.

Ms. Schlather reported she cautioned against increasing the fund raising goal by such a high percentage because it is not realistic. Ms. Jackier said last year the United Way provided a flexible fund grant to assist in offsetting the debt. In response to Committee members' questions, it was noted the majority of children are residents of the City, which also provides some funding for the agency. The total debt is \$108,000, and at six percent interest on the mortgage. Presently there are 29 permanent employees, with 5-6 substitutes.

Mr. Shinagawa said it would be a very difficult budget year. Ms. Jackier stressed the importance of individuals of low-income having affordable day care to enable them to work and therefore stay off public assistance. She also spoke of the requirements now necessary to obtain child-care stipends, many of which the clientele are unable to do. Mr. Proto said he believes that more requests such as this will be forthcoming from agencies. *Mr. Proto requested that the Committee receive copies of financial statements of agencies requesting funding.* Ms. Schlather said that although the information is presently being discussed with the Committee, no determination has been made yet by the Human Service Coalition review committee regarding the funding request. Ms. Jackier requested that she receive advice from the County if her financial situation becomes critical.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr left at this time (5:10 p.m.).

Human Rights Commission

Rollover Funds Request

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Proto, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present (Mr. Koplinka-Loehr excused), to approve the 2007 rollover fund request for the Human Rights Commission. Ms. Martel-Moore explained the funds consistently have been used to fund the personnel lines for her department.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of May 16, 2007, as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

Executive Session

Health and Human Services Committee Minutes
June 6, 2007

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to enter into an executive session to discuss a legal matter.

An executive session occurred from 5:14 p.m. to 5:18 p.m. On motion by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Mr. Proto, the Committee exited executive session.

Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk