

Public Health & Social Services Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: October 5, 2020 – 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656,
Meeting ID: 954 4594 6139
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair Craig Lopez
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Nettie Tomshaw, Laurie Lichtenstein
PRESENT: Legislators Criswell, Bruno, Petit, Uchitelle
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Lynn Archer, Deputy County Executive Marc Rider, Deputy County Executive, DSS Commissioner Michael Iapoce, DOH Commissioner Dr. Carol Smith MD, MPH, DOH Deputy Commissioner Tara McDonald, DOH Deputy Director Admin. Kristin Carney, DSS Fiscal Manager Peter Carney, Hank Gross Mid-Hudson News

Chair Lopez called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.

Motion No. 1: Moved to Approve Minutes & Transcript of the August 31, 2020 meeting
Motion By: Legislator Bruno
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Criswell
Discussion: None
Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Criswell, Bruno, Petit, Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Minutes/Transcript **APPROVED**

Resolutions for the October 20, 2020 Session of the Legislature

Resolution No. 330: Amending The 2020 Ulster County Budget To Reflect Public Health Preparedness Funding For The COVID 19 Enhanced Detection Grant And Create Positions – Department Of Health

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends the 2020 Ulster County budget to accept public health preparedness funding for the COVID-19 Enhanced Detection Grant and to create positions within the Department of Health. \$47.7K revenue

Motion No. 2 Moved to Discuss and Adopt Resolution No. 330

Motion Made By: Legislator Bruno

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion: See attached transcript. (Sunset clause amendment may be added in Ways & Means Committee)

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Bruno, Criswell, Petit, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Resolution adopted.

Resolution No. 331: Amending The 2020 Ulster County Budget To Accept Supplemental Immunization Action Plan Funding From The New York State Department Of Health For Flu Activities – Ulster County Department Of Health

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends the 2020 Ulster County budget to accept supplemental immunization action plan funding from the NYS DOH for flu vaccine activities fro the 2020-21 flu season. \$39K

Motion No. 3 Moved to Discuss and Adopt Resolution No. 331

Motion Made By: Legislator Bruno

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Bruno, Criswell, Petit, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Resolution adopted.

Resolution No. 332: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute A Contract With The New York State Department Of Health To Continue The Children and Youth With Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program – Ulster County Department Of Health

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the chair of the Ulster County Legislature to execute a contract with the NYS DOH to continue the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs program. If funding is eliminated the program continuance will be evaluated. \$144.5K
10/1/2020-9/30/2025

Motion No. 4 Moved to Discuss and Adopt Resolution No. 332

Motion Made By: Legislator Petit

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bruno

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Bruno, Criswell, Petit, Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Resolution adopted.

Resolution No. 352: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$74,956.00 Entered Into By The County – PEOPLE: Projects To Empower And Organize The Psychiatrically Labeled, Inc. – Department Of Health

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract with PEOPLE for the delivery and execution of human services program to work closely with the Ulster County High Risk Mitigation Team to identify and provide comprehensive guidance and support services for persistent high-risk opioid/substance users in Kingston. 100% Federal \$75K 9/1/2020 - 8/31/2021.

Motion No. 5 **Moved to Discuss and Adopt Resolution No. 352**
Motion Made By: Legislator Bruno
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Bruno, Criswell, Petit, Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Resolution adopted.

Resolution No. 353: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$65,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Health Research, Inc. – Department Of Health

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract with Health Research, Inc. for opioid use disorder – building local health department capacity funding. \$100% Federal Revenue \$65K 9/1/2020 – 8/31/2021.

Motion No. 6 **Moved to Discuss and Adopt Resolution No. 353**
Motion Made By: Legislator Petit
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Criswell

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Bruno, Criswell, Petit, Uchitelle
Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Resolution adopted.

Motion No. 7 **Resolve to Block & Approve Resolution Nos. 354 - 375 for the October 20, 2020 Session**

Resolution Summary: The block of resolutions reflects contracts between the Ulster County Department of Social Services and numerous agencies for professional foster care services for children. 36% Federal, 29% State, 35% County, Contract Dates 7/1/2020 – 6/30/2022.

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Motion Made By: Legislator Uchitelle

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bruno

Text of Motion: **Resolution No. 354** – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$350,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Woods Services, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$350K

Resolution No. 355 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Astor Services For Children & Families– Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 356 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Berkshire Farm Center And Services For Youth – Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 357 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$500,000.00 Entered Into By The County – The Children's Home Of Kingston, New York – Department Of Social Services \$500K

Resolution No. 358 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$3,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – The Children's Home Of Poughkeepsie, N.Y. – Department Of Social Services \$3 million

Resolution No. 359 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$500,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Catholic Charities Of The Diocese Of Albany, Community Maternity Services – Department Of Social Services \$500K

Resolution No. 360 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Devereux Foundation – Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 361 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Green Chimneys Children's Services, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 362 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$500,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Hillside Children's Center – Department Of Social Services \$500K

Resolution No. 363 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$400,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$400K

Resolution No. 364 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$2,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Kidspace National Centers Of North America, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$2 million

Resolution No. 365 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$2,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – La Salle School – Department Of Social Services \$2 million

Resolution No. 366 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Mental Health Association In Ulster County, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 367 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$250,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Northeast Parent And Child Society, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$250K

Resolution No. 368 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Parsons Child And Family Center – Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 369 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$400,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Rising Ground, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$400K

Resolution No. 370–_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$250,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Saint Anne Institute – Department Of Social Services \$250K

Resolution No. 371 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$2,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – St. Catherine's Center For Children – Department Of Social Services \$2 million

Resolution No. 372 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$3,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – St. Christopher's, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$3 million

Resolution No. 373 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$1,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Saint John Bosco Child And Family Services – Department Of Social Services \$1 million

Resolution No. 374 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$2,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Vanderheyden Hall, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$2 million

Resolution No. 375 –_Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$2,000,000.00 Entered Into By The County – The William George Agency For Children's Services, Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$2 million

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Criswell, Bruno, Petit, Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Resolutions adopted

Motion No. 8 **Resolve to Block & Approve Resolution Nos. 376 - 378 for the October 20, 2020 Session**

Resolution Summary: The block of resolutions reflects amended contracts #1 between the Ulster County Department of Social Services and transportation agencies for early intervention and preschool transportation for children. 59.5% State, 40.5% County, Contract Dates Prior Term 9/1/19 – 8/31/22, Amd. Term 9/1/20 - 8/31/22.

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Motion Made By: Legislator Uchitelle

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bruno

Text of Motion: Resolution No. 376 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment Entered Into By The County For Rates Anticipated To Exceed \$50,000.00 – Birnie Bus Service Inc. – Department Of Social Services \$50K

Resolution No. 377 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment Entered Into By The County For Rates Anticipated To Exceed \$50,000.00 – MAT Bus Corp. – Department Of Social Services \$50K

Resolution No. 378 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment Entered Into By The County For Rates Anticipated To Exceed \$50,000.00 – Rolling V Bus Corp. – Department Of Social Services \$50K

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Criswell, Bruno, Petit, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Resolutions adopted

New/Old Business: None

Chair Lopez asked if there was any other business, and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Bruno
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Uchitelle
No. of Votes in Favor: 5
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:25 PM

Respectfully submitted: Nettie Tomshaw, Legislative Staff
Minutes Approved: November 2, 2020

Ulster County Legislature
Public Health and Social Services Committee

Meeting Transcript
October 5, 2020

Chairman Lopez

Let's call the meeting to order. And I'll ask for a motion to approve the minutes from our last meeting.

Legislator Bruno

I'll make that motion.

Legislator Criswell

Second.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Any discussion? All in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Okay, very good. All right. Well get right into resolutions, then we will start with Resolution 330: Amending The 2020 Ulster County Budget To Reflect Public Health Preparedness Funding For The COVID-19 Enhanced Detection.

Chairman Lopez

Move for discussion?

Legislator Bruno

I'll move for discussion

Chairman Lopez

Second?

Legislator Petit

Second.

All right. This is I believe that a federal pass through.

Deputy Executive Rider

So, do you want me to...

Deputy Executive Rider

good.

Deputy Executive Rider

So, last month, we asked you all to accept a contract through HRI, which was federal funding. And it was for enhanced COVID operations. The money that we accepted in that resolution last month is being used towards hiring a supervising health nurse and to public health nurses to focus just on, solely on COVID operations. And we hope that this will allow us to, to come back off of our contract nurse grant that we're... or contract, nurse contract that we're using, currently, so...

Legislator Petit

So, this will come off of the contract, and they'll be employees of the County of Ulster.

Deputy Executive Rider

Yeah, they won't necessarily be the same people. But if we hire these folks and get them trained up, we won't need to use as many contract nurses, which is more expensive in the in the short term than these public health nurses with benefits and everything and legacy costs. These might be greater, but these are just... these will sunset when the grant goes away. So, they're 100% federally funded anyway.

Legislator Bruno

This is the same, the exact same thing we talked with last time, is that right, Marc.

Deputy Executive Rider

Correct.

Chairman Lopez

Now that's great, Marc. No, I appreciate that. I know there are a number of questions regarding, so. All right. Is there any further discussion? All right, hearing none, all in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Okay. All right, we will move on to Resolution 331: Amending The 2020 Ulster County Budget To Accept Supplemental Immunization Action Plan Funding From The New York State Department Of Health For Flu Activities. This is to expand the flu vaccine outreach and promote mass vaccinations as a 2021 flu season. Move for discussion.

Legislator Bruno

I'll make that motion for discussion.

Legislator Petit

Second.

Legislator Bruno

I got a question. This is strictly flu vaccine, correct? Yes. It's not the new-fangled, whichever... It's not going to be COVID vaccine.

Chairman Lopez

It is not.

Legislator Uchitelle

I wish it was.

Commissioner Dr. Smith

Yeah, we all do.

Deputy Executive Rider

I don't know if you want to speak to doctors, doctor's kind of initiatives and mandates toward you all for this funding?

Commissioner Smith

Well, you know, certainly they want us... they had asked for our plan as to how we were going to move forward with support for getting the community on board with, you know, getting their flu vaccinations, etc. In light of the fact that with flu season coming upon us on top of the COVID situation, that we would potentially have an

exponential worsening of the pandemic, by virtue of the flu epidemic, which we would certainly want to make sure we control right from the get-go.

Commissioner Dr. Smith

And because of some of the difficulties, certainly in dissociating are, or differentiating between the very similar presentations of both of these infections with respect to symptoms and whatnot. So they, you know, they did ask us for our plans, but, you know, certainly were, you know, initially at least poised to start our usual public health education campaign to support this and to promote that moving forward. And, you know, now that the flu vaccine is so widely available at most of the pharmacies, anyway. You know, the push for us to be the sole provider of community vaccination has, over the last few years waned because of the really widespread availability. So, beyond that, I'm not sure of answering your question Marc. But that's where the genesis of this is coming from.

Legislator Bruno

At this point, it's still the flu vaccine is still a voluntary vaccine. It's not mandated by the state.

Commissioner Smith

Not yet. But there is a potential for that happening, knowing how they fed today, with respect to mandating the use of masks. Again, the issue certainly is enforcement when it comes to executive orders or mandates. So, I'm not sure what that's going to look like. But they can certainly make a move to have that happen. And they may very well.

Chairman Lopez

How would they enforce that? That type of mandate?

Commissioner Smith

Very difficult, but, you know, you could enforce it in such ways as you know, admission to, you know, school basically involving the, you know, making sure that folks have had the flu vaccination as part of the usual mandated vaccines like measles, mumps, rubella, and what other issues. So, you know, that could certainly be one way to do it, too. You can mandate that health care workers, you know, have it. As well as they've been doing, mandating that they wear masks, etc. And that you literally have to have a medical reason why you can't do a flu, or get a flu vaccine. So, you know, they've been precedencies for this type of thing happening for sure. And it may very well be in our future.

Chairman Lopez

Right, you know, that it would be a little more difficult to enforce it. Like if, like with the measles shot, you know, the rubella you know, that the mumps like, you need that in order to go through the school system. It's, you get once you know, a flu shot, on the other hand, you get every year, it's harder to track and enforce, you know, especially as accountability.

Legislator Bruno

It's only a 50-50 shot if they picked the right vaccine for that year.

Deputy Executive Rider

And I just want to clarify, Dr. Smith, you haven't heard through Dr. Zucker, anything this is something imminently coming down the road, you're just speculating that this...

Commissioner Smith

I'm speculating that it may very well be added to it, but I don't have definitive evidence for that yet. Right.

Legislator Bruno

Was there...

Legislator Petit

I hope you're wrong.

Legislator Bruno

Was there talk of that, doctor?

Commissioner Smith

Yes. There has been discussion about it. Yes.

Chairman Lopez

All right. All right. All in favor.

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Let's see. We are...

Nettie Tomshaw

332

Chairman Lopez

Yep. 352 resolution: Approving The Execution Of A Contract With People's Project.

Nettie Tomshaw

332.

Chairman Lopez

Oh. I'm sorry. Okay. Yeah. Resolution 332: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute A Contract With The New York State Department Of Health To Continue The Children and Youth With Special Health Care Needs.

Chairman Lopez

Move for discussion, motion.

Legislator Petit

I'll make that motion.

Legislator Bruno

I'll second it. Come on, anybody else on this committee?

Chairman Lopez

And a second.

Chairman Lopez

This program provides families with information and referrals on what insurance and health services to address their identified special health care needs. If Marc, if you want to elaborate on that, or if Dr. Smith would like to, as well, or if anybody has questions.

Commissioner Smith

It has been an ongoing program of the Department of Health. It predated me in terms of its being, you know, housed in the department. Sue Jordan, who has been the person who has been solely really grant funded to do this work. It also works in conjunction with early intervention, which is under the auspices of DSS. And very often the two will be in communication with respect to referrals. But it's been an

ongoing program of the Department for certainly, like I said, at least 10 years that I know of.

Deputy Executive Rider

Solely funded, correct, Dr. Smith.

Legislator Bruno

Yeah. So, it's a grant funded we're just renewing the contract. We're not creating a whole another...

Chairman Lopez

Yeah.

Commissioner Smith

So, renewal.

Deputy Executive Rider

We're accepting in the grant money. Legislator Bruno, right.

Legislator Bruno

Gotcha. This is just to allow us to take money; it's a no brainer.

Chairman Lopez

Yeah. All right. Anything else? All in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Resolution 352: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$74,956.00 Entered Into By The County – PEOPLE: Projects To Empower And Organize The Psychiatrically Labeled, Inc. to work with the County High Risk Mitigation team to provide support services for high risk substance users in Kingston.

Legislator Bruno

Motion to move for discussion.

Chairman Lopez

A second on that?

Legislator Petit

I'll second.

Legislator Bruno

I have a question. How is this being affected by Westchester Medical Center, taking the services out of Kingston Hospital and the hospital?

Deputy Executive Rider

So, I mean, this is I'll say anything dealing with substance abuse, or mental health beds are affected by that decision, right. But this is taking HEALING funds and putting it towards a high-risk mitigation team. I believe there's been a resolution in front of you in the past to do this, we did an RFP. Ellenville Regional Hospital administers this program, outside of the City of Kingston. And this is adding in the City of Kingston to basically that program, and it'll be done by People Inc, who are partners with us in substance abuse in other areas too. To really provide this high-risk mitigation teamwork with a handful of kind of the most - high risk population in substance abuse, not anything else that.

Legislator Bruno

I'm all for anything we can do to mitigate the epidemic, in this case, is actually pandemic when it comes to substance abuse. My problem I have is, at this point, given the stance that Westchester Medical Health Alliance has taken Ulster County and I don't want to see any money go to them. Basically, what I'm saying, I don't mind helping out the parent. I don't mind helping the people who need it. And if it's going to Ellenville Hospital great, but I don't want to see our money that that should be going to residents that needed in our county getting funneled down to Westchester County or to Poughkeepsie so that they can do what they want.

Deputy Executive Rider

No, this is going to People Inc. That's...

Legislator Bruno

I don't know who People Inc. That's why I'm asking you.

Deputy Executive Rider

They are a nonprofit organization that deals in this world.

Legislator Petit

Do they have a brick and mortar building in Ulster County?

Deputy Executive Rider

Tarra, you're on mute.

Tara McDonald

Am I on mute?

Deputy Executive Rider

No. You're okay.

Tara McDonald

They have a building on Albany Avenue. They've had a brick and mortar building in the county for some time, they just moved this new, larger space. And the hope is that the High-Risk Mitigation team will be able to buffer the loss if we do indeed suffer the loss of these beds because it will be interesting. Hence, following in support of these individuals struggling in towns by the substance use disorder, but the money is, I don't believe, are going HealthAlliance at Westchester Medical Center.

Commissioner Smith

No, they're not. And remember people that specializes in the provision of peers. And the use of peers, in substance use disorder care, is what's considered an evidence based initiative, basically. In fact, the behavioral health substance use disorder treatment programs basically are pretty much required to incorporate the use of peers, that's by O.A.S.I.S., into their care plans and programs.

Commissioner Smith

So, these peers then would be the individuals who would be the direct contact people to try to, for these folks that are, you know, known to be either, you know, multiple overdoses in their history, or they're repeatedly utilizing services, emergency services, etc., because their substance use disorder. But the peers are meant to engage them. So that, hopefully, they will be connected to treatment, as opposed to falling through the cracks in that realm of treatment. Because these are the most at risk people for recidivism and going back and again, using the substance and potentially overdosing. So, that's really the point of this program. And to attempt to focus it on the most at risk substance users in the county.

Chairman Lopez

All right. Very good. Thank you. Any other discussion? All in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Okay. This will move on to Resolution 353: approving the execution of the contract with health research for building local health department capacity funding. Move for discussion.

Legislator Petit

I'll make that motion.

Chairman Lopez

There you go. Second?

Legislator Criswell

Second it.

Chairman Lopez

Do we have any discussion? This is, this is 100% federal. Is this a reimbursement? Or is this... or is this pass through?

Deputy Executive Rider

Dr. Smith or Kristin? I'll let one of you take.

Kristin Carney

It's a reimbursement.

Chairman Lopez

It is a reimbursement. Yeah, I didn't see that in the abstract. So, I appreciate it. Any discussion? All right. Hearing none, all in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Now, the next resolutions, we could probably block 354 through 375. These are all for foster care related services. I'm sure there's going to be questions on the contract. So, if we block them together and then discuss as a block, maybe if anybody has any questions on each contract, we can go through that. Would anybody be opposed?

Legislator Uchitelle

You want a motion? I think that's a great idea. I was going to bring it up. Do you want a motion for that?

Chairman Lopez

Yes.

Legislator Uchitelle

I moved to block 354 to 375.

Legislator Bruno

I'll second it.

Chairman Lopez

Okay, and discussion on that block.

Legislator Petit

Not necessarily on the resolutions?

Legislator Uchitelle

This is just on the block. We still need to take the vote on the block.

Legislator Petit

By first seeing.

Nettie Tomshaw

Just to block.

Chairman Lopez

Right. Okay, so that was a vote on the block. All in favor to block.

Committee Members

Aye (5-0).

Chairman Lopez

Okay. And then a discussion on the resolutions.

Legislator Criswell

I had a question.

Chairman Lopez

Sure.

Legislator Criswell

For several of the contracts, I saw a note at the bottom that they were appropriation dollars. But then there was also a small note saying that it was a split between state and federal and county. And so, Marc, could you explain how that works? The money split. I think it was like 35% for county and I can't remember the exact numbers.

Multiple speakers

[Inaudible]

Deputy Executive Rider

We've got Pete Carney from DSS here. One of the one gentlemen behind this mask in the Mike Iapocce block. He's the fiscal manager for DSS. And I'll let him.

Legislator Criswell

Okay. So, my question was some of the contracts had that some didn't, I think. And I'm just trying to understand the difference between appropriation dollars and what's coming from the county.

Peter Carney

These children are placed there for under different types of programs which receive various types of reimbursement. So, some of them are going to get a portion of federal some of them a portion of state, and there's going to be a county share, depending on what eligibility these children fall under. I'm not sure if that helps.

Legislator Criswell

So, we don't really know what the county portion would be?

Nettie Tomshaw

We do. We do. Okay, so all of the resolutions within this block are 35% County, 29% State and 36% Federal. All of them.

Peter Carney

They are estimates, we're going on previous history, because as you said, we don't know the children that are going to be in care going forward. So, that's a, you know, a ballpark estimate. It will fluctuate a little bit either way. But yes, that is correct.

Legislator Bruno

Are we guaranteed the state and federal funds behind this?

Peter Carney

So, at this point, are you talking now because of COVID? Or generally?

Legislator Bruno

Yeah, well, because of COVID, mainly. And are we going to get stuck with the hook for the hundred percent of this then at the end of the day when...

Peter Carney

So, of right now, there is no nothing in the works for federal, that I've heard of. The state, they are currently holding, withholding 20%. But that's a withhold, they're not cutting at this time.

Legislator Bruno

But so, they are 35%, could end up to 55%.

Deputy Executive Rider

It could. These are mandated services by the state.

Legislator Criswell

I guess what I was curious was seeing so many resolutions, I never, there was no total number of what the county would be putting in, what the state would be putting in, what the feds, even if it's based on your estimated percentages, I was hoping to see like, here's the total chunk of change that's coming from the county.

Peter Carney

It would be linked to actually our budget. Those are... they would show up in our different program areas in our budget. Now, obviously, it doesn't link to each contract separately, but each program is in our budget.

Deputy Executive Rider

What I also want to point out is these are not to exceed contracts, and it depends on... we don't know whether a child is going to be placed in a specific... one of these contracts. These are estimates from a prior year or what we anticipate going into 2021. But we could have children that each of these provides slightly different services, Oftentimes, and geographical locations. And so, it depends on the children that we get out of foster care.

Chairman Lopez

Right. So, the contract, like, depending on the number of children, it could be less or it could be more. Generally, if it's more then it comes back to committee, right, to that... as an override or allowing and not succeed.

Deputy Executive Rider

Correct, it would come back to you. If we have to seed it, period, we have to come back.

Chairman Lopez

It always has to come back.

Deputy Executive Rider

But if these amounts don't exceed the amount budgeted overall for foster care services.

Legislator Criswell

I was also surprised to see so many providers, like I just I had no idea that we use so many different providers from the county. And that the providers were a wide range, you know, north of Albany all the way south to Pennsylvania. So, is that typical to have so many providers or for this service?

Commissioner Iapoce

It is typical, Peter, and a couple of the dynamics behind having many providers under contract are that, and Marc alluded to this. We can't really predict at any one given time how many of the children we have in our current custody might have to go into residential treatment centers. So, some of the things that we have to contend with, we may be under contract with a facility that has no vacancies. So, we want to have a large number of providers available to submit applications to base on the

specific needs of each child and then what their frequencies are. And when we arrive at this point, sometimes, depending upon what those underlying variables are, we may have to apply the three four or five, six facilities before we find a vacancy and a fit based on what their needs are.

Commissioner Iapoce

So, that's why we have a large number. And from a liability point of view, we don't want to find ourselves in a situation where we are arrived at being directed to have a child go to residential treatment care, where we're not able to make that arrangement because we don't have a contract in place. And I think it's also important and was alluded to earlier, in the event that we did have a situation where we exceeded and not to exceed, we would come back to the committee to make sure that that contract got amended for that facility.

Legislator Criswell

Thank you. And I also want to thank you for your very thorough explanation of the question that I had the last meeting. Thank you for sending that along.

Commissioner Iapoce

I got that in just under the wire. I couldn't believe that two months had elapsed. It's been a busy time for all of us. But that is one of our important positions here. And when you asked that question, I was actually just really encouraged by the opportunity to provide you with that information. Because I think the data and the case examples demonstrate how important that work is. And it kind of directly relates to this block of contracts. If we can get services that are preventive into those households and those children, they don't have to come into custody, they don't have to ever get placed. So, that's why a program like that, with an underlying contract, which is \$75,000, or \$100,000, if they can keep 25 to 30 kids out of placement a year, you can see how the numbers are more than justified. So, I appreciate the question. And you're welcome.

Legislator Criswell

Absolutely. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Good. All right. Any other discussion?

Chairman Lopez

All right. On the resolutions. All in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Opposed? All right, Carried.

Chairman Lopez

Very good, we will go to Resolution 376.

Legislator Petit

Can we block them?

Legislator Uchitelle

We could block all of those, right?

Legislator Petit

Yeah.

Chairman Lopez

We can block. Yeah, block the three. Sure.

Legislator Uchitelle

Are there any differences? I'll make the motion. And then in discussion we'll ask we'll ask Deputy Executive Rider. So, I move to block 375. Sorry, 376 through 378.

Legislator Bruno

Second that.

Legislator Petit

I'll second.

Chairman Lopez

On the block, all in favor?

Legislator Uchitelle

Well, just hold on, in discussion. Can we can we hear from Deputy Executive Rider if there are any differences in the contracts?

Chairman Lopez

Yeah, no, no, definitely. Yep.

Deputy Executive Rider

They're generally the same. These are our preschool, correct me if I'm wrong, Mike, these are our preschool education, transportation services. We go out to bid on these. And generally, these are... these are rates that are established by New York State, I believe, and so there should not be big differences between any of the contracts.

Commissioner Iapoce

Coming through loud and clear? I feel like I'm shouting at everybody. Don't want to be...

Chairman Lopez

No, we hear you.

Commissioner Iapoce

Okay, great. Yeah, Mark's absolutely correct about that, um, all of them are similar, so it's appropriate to consider blocking them. And as Marc explained out to bid, they include agreed upon rates that are set. So, there's nothing that I could really add to that explanation. It is absolutely accurate.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Any other discussion? On the resolutions then?

Legislator Uchitelle

We've got to finish on the block.

Chairman Lopez

I'm sorry?

Legislator Uchitelle

We got to do the block first.

Chairman Lopez

Oh, yeah.

Legislator Uchitelle

We've got to call the question on the block.

Chairman Lopez

Yeah. All right. I'm on the block. All in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

And on the resolutions?

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

I think that is it on resolutions. Very good.

Chairman Lopez

So, we'll go back to Dr. Smith and Commissioner Iapoce. Want to give us an update. Maybe take some questions regarding this year's budget.

Commissioner Iapoce

We both have a member of the Carney family with us captive. So, we're, we can kind of flip a coin, Carol, if you want to. But I would defer to you know, having us lead off if you'd like to.

Excuse me, Craig. Somebody just joined us. 6952923. Could you please tell us who the caller is?

Hank Gross

[inaudible]

Nettie Tomshaw

Could you please state your name, phone number ending in 2923?

Hank Gross

Hank Gross.

Nettie Tomshaw

Hank Gross. Thank you. I'm sorry, Craig.

Chairman Lopez

Yep. Oh, well did you guys decide who was going to go first? A virtual, rock paper, scissors or?

Commissioner Smith

I think I'll defer to my captive Carney. Kristin, do you want to give an overview of the budget? Or Marc. You know, I think I don't know where to begin. Maybe that's my problem here. Um, is there a specific question about it that you'd like us to answer first and then get into the details? Or...

Deputy Executive Rider

Do you want to talk about any specific programs, Dr. Smith? Initiatives, anything new in this budget?

Commissioner Smith

Okay, well, a couple of the things that we already, more or less discussed, with the acceptance of grant money. You know, certainly COVID has had us, you know, as everyone knows, here, as it's been, it had us extremely busy and engaged since March 10. On a marathon basis, really.

Commissioner Smith

But you know, what we've done is the COVID funding that we just accepted through this resolution, basically, is going to allow us to expand on our staffing so that we can continue the all-important contact tracing. Because right now, you know, certainly one of the things that's delegated to us as a health department is contact or positive case investigation. Which then leads to identification of contacts of that positive case.

Commissioner Smith

And then what we do is, we've been in very engaged with, a brand - new system that the state has really designed and developed. Sort of building the plane as we fly it, since March and April, which is known as Comcare. And that's a system in which the state has agreed to basically hire what's called virtual contact tracers to help all the various counties do this contact investigation piece, which could get very consuming because potentially people can have few or many, many contacts.

Commissioner Smith

So, in any event, there is that process that we engage with, we have a staff member who's very much a part of the Comcare system as are our nurses inputting information. But you know, the, the doing of the initial positive case investigation piece has really fallen to the health department, which has necessitated us to contract with nurses to supplement our own nurses who do this kind of work.

Commissioner Smith

Well, with the COVID-19 money that we're accepting here, we're going to be able to hire additional nurses, 100% COVID-19, funding, supported to help with this process. So, we'll be less dependent on having to have the Accucare nurses supplement our own staff. Hopefully, these nurses who will be brought in through contract funding would be able to do that process. But the contact investigation, case investigation pieces, is very time consuming. You have to make calls. It is an actual outreach to these individuals. So, in any event, that's part of what we, you know, just resolved to accept.

Commissioner Smith

The other issue with respect to the, you know, COVID itself has certainly created a heightened sense of anxiety and all of us. But it certainly has impacted folks with behavioral health issues, as well. We've seen an uptick in the number of opioid overdoses, a number of suicides, violent behavior, homicides, as well, as you know, we've seen fatal accidents.

Commissioner Smith

But the, the money that we accepted for the HEALING Communities Grant, we have, you know, various initiatives going on with respect to the opiate overdose issue, which COVID does contribute to but we've had an issue now really escalating over several years. You know, in order to expand the mitigation team business and whatnot for supporting the work of the HEALING Communities Grant and the two individuals who we've hired basically to support that work. But we were able now to expand on that because of that funding.

Commissioner Smith

The other issue of let's see, what am I missing here? Kristin help me out. Is there anything?

Kristin Carney

Mobile mental health expansion.

Commissioner Smith

Mobile mental health expansion. Thank you. That's a big one. You know, the mobile mental health team has been in Ulster County now for a few years. The team itself is run by Access Supports for Living. It has... they regularly report to us on their usage. I think that data tells a tremendous story about the role that those folks fulfill in our community. They literally take the call of individuals in crisis. Go out to the house, or whatever, to help to defuse the situation, if possible. If not, and the individual must go to the hospital, they can, licensed social workers who are trained, make that determination. I think it's been a tremendous asset for the community.

Commissioner Smith

And one of the things that really was determined in their data patterns of usage is that the hours between 10 and 12 in the morning, are really, the morning hours really are the highest usage periods. We, throughout the afternoon, the late morning, throughout the afternoon, with a bit right around the dinner hour. But essentially, the later hours are not as heavily utilized. But in any event, those earlier hours, especially when it comes to schools needing the support of mobile mental health teams, you know, are important.

Commissioner Smith

So, the added funding will help to put the team on duty from 10 to 12. Whereas they now start at 12. So, that's extremely important. And the having a trained social worker employed to literally, you know, sit in the 911 Center, so, that when calls come in, that are obviously related to behavioral health crises are issues, that support person can be right there and available. Which hopefully will also help with the impact on law enforcement that some of these crisis goals definitely impose. So, that's the other piece of this. That's part of our initiative. Kristin, anything else?

Commissioner Smith

No. I think those are the main highlights of new initiatives.

Legislator Criswell

I had a quick question about what you were just talking about with the mental health professional sitting with 911. Is that one staffer? Is that one staff position? Or is that a couple because one person obviously can't cover, you know, 24/7.

Commissioner McDonald

So, it's for one staff person. The decision was made to start from looking at the data and trying to figure out the highest call volume between what the 911 Center gets in now with regards to emotionally disturbed persons calls. And the mobile mental health team we decided to do from noon to eight in the evening, one person doing that shift. And then if it does better, we can look at splitting it up and just really allowing the data to make those sorts of decisions.

Legislator Criswell

Thank you.

Commissioner McDonald

Sure.

Chairman Lopez

And any other questions for Dr. Smith?

Legislator Bruno

I got a question.

Legislator Petit

Lynn Archer. Al Bruno.

Chairman Lopez

Mmm hmm, go ahead

Legislator Archer

Al, you want to go ahead and all follow up?

Legislator Bruno

Well, sure. My question is a little kind of off the wall. But Dr. Smith, with all the contact tracing, and I've been following COVID like we all have from the start. Is there any data? Is anybody even compiling any data that the contact tracing and all the monies that are associated with doing that are actually preventing any spread? Or is there any kind of data that backs up doing all the contact tracing?

Commissioner Smith

Well, first of all, there's a lot of data that we've been tracking, as a county, with a pretty rigorous database. And, you know, it's all posted on the county website. So, the whole story is there right from the very first days, right till the present moment.

Where we track the positives. Whether they're noted to be in the community, or in a hospital setting, or in a nursing home, or in another congregate care setting, such as an OPWDD facility like Ark, or Ulster Green or, you know, in the, in any event, any of the congregate care settings. So, we have all the data of all those numbers of positive tests.

Commissioner Smith

The answer to your questions a little bit more complicated. Because, as in some situations, it's tough to say whether an initiative will prevent something, and therefore, you can base the data on what it potentially could prevent. I think the best way to explain that as a yes is to say that when you look at the fact that the state's been doing very active contact tracing, and an attempt to control the spread, just look at those numbers. Because whether it's on our website, or the Governor's website, or now the schools each have to have their own data presented on a daily basis on their websites.

Commissioner Smith

The fact that we're keeping those percentages low, like 1% or less, as a state, actively engaged in aggressive contact investigation and isolating positives and quarantining contacts for 14 days. I think that speaks for itself. Whereas in those locales that were states that have not done it, you could look at the big shift... big evidence of those high percentages of spread in those locales that haven't had the same kind of active contact tracing and control systems employed.

Commissioner Smith

So, I think those numbers speak for themselves, really, when you look at those percentages. So, you know what, that's the best explanation, I think. Because comparatively, New York has been doing much better than many states, when it started out where we were a hotspot, right, the very beginning of this pandemic. And, you know, the fact that we acted so aggressively as a state, and thereby each of the counties, I think, to reverse that tremendous peak and curve, is really tells the story, you know, that it works.

Legislator Bruno

I guess my question, I appreciate, thank you. First of all, my I guess my question was more... New York State and Ulster County has done a lot of different initiatives. A ton of initiatives. From simple as the masks and social distancing and closing places of congregation, whether it be work or others. There's been so many things that we've done as a group, including the contact tracing, but breaking it out. Like, I guess what I'm saying is that we spend a lot of money on contract tracing,

and is it actually effective money? Or can money be used, maybe more on the social service for the people that are reacting, you know, with psychological disorders, better than the contact tracing.

Legislator Bruno

You understand what I'm saying? There's so many things that you can't, it's hard to attribute it to one thing, and I guess that's what I was looking for. But the masks are doing, our saving this much, or this much positives. You know, knowing that we have these many positives by the contact tracing is that actually, what does that really doing for us? And I'm sorry, if I'm carrying on... sounds like I'm going off. But I'm just, we do a lot, and I think New York has done a great job. I think the county has done a great job, I'm not saying anything bad. I'm just curious as of what parts of those things are really where it is...

Commissioner Smith

Sometimes it's very difficult to separate the parts from the whole. And I think that's where we're looking at the whole as being represented by that low percentage of transmission in our area. And it's not just our county, it's our region and they're looked at as a region etc. And, you know, whenever there is a, an uptick in the number of in a particular area called the hotspot or whatever, we try to get even more aggressive about pursuing the pause complaints and trying to enforce the executive orders on wearing the mask, etc.

Commissioner Smith

So, I think you'd really have to look at the big picture. As you know, each of these parts plays a role. How you can separate out and then say, well, this part plays... I think that's next to impossible, to be honest with you. You know, just looking at the complexity of this and complexity of trying to track this pandemic virus that is brand new to the entire world. We've yet to we don't really have the benefit of 2020 hindsight yet on this virus like we do with some of the other communicable viruses.

Commissioner Smith

But you know, it's been a learning process right from day one, and continues to be. The story is yet to reach its conclusion, certainly. I think we're in it for a longer haul than we even realize. But, you know, I think all together, when you look back, I think keeping that percentage 1% or, or less than that is a remarkable achievement. Given the fact that it is so contagious and transmissible, that anything short of doing all of those things that we've done, would have really resulted in an increase in the numbers, in my opinion.

Deputy Executive Rider

I also think if I could just add one thing to this, Craig and Al. I think we oftentimes, and I'm guilty of this probably in these committees, so, this is where you're getting this idea. We speak loosely about contact tracing, and we group a lot of activities into what contact tracing actually is. We actually spend very little money on contact tracing as a county because the contact tracers, the ones that are actually hired by the state, and Bloomberg Philanthropies, and our volunteers on our end are, they're the ones reaching out to the contacts.

Deputy Executive Rider

Now, contact tracing is larger than that. It's doing the case investigations, which is what our public health nurses are doing. It's making sure we get quarantine orders out, it's making sure we're monitoring the cases. In some respects, it's testing individuals who we know have been in direct contact. Or setting up testing centers.

Deputy Executive Rider

So, that's where like our Accucare contract has spent, we've spent the bulk of the money there. And it's really not so much contact tracing, but all those other pieces that I just kind of grouped in there. Sometimes I loosely say that they're doing contact tracing, when in reality they're doing, you know, eight to 10 different activities.

Legislator Bruno

Well, thank you for your reply... appreciate it.

Chairman Lopez

Now, though, it I think it was a good question. And yeah, and I appreciate the answers and input from everybody.

Chairman Lopez

Are there any other questions?

Nettie Tomshaw

Lynn Archer

Chairman Lopez

Yep. Sure.

Legislator Archer

Yep. Thank you. I appreciate it. Just a couple of questions. I guess, resolution, tonight's resolution, 330, is approving the funding for the additional nurses that we have... we previously approved for contract, but this is for hire, correct? And would this be the nurses that are in Division 221?

Multiple speakers

Yeah.

Legislator Archer

Are they sun-setted? So, you know, are they... the positions, that should the funding go away, because it is around contact tracing around the epidemic. So, if all of that gets resolved, these positions do go away? They are sun-setted?

Deputy Executive Rider

Yes, which is why we created that specific division.

Legislator Archer

That's what I wanted.... because it is separate and apart from the preparedness, but it is part of, correct.

Deputy Executive Rider

Correct.

Legislator Archer

All right. I just needed the clarification. Thank you.

Legislator Petit

Did we need to put that in the resolution? Do we need to go back and...

Legislator Archer

It should be, it should be in the resolution.

Legislator Petit

Is it in there?

Chairman Lopez

It would be in the contract? No?

Legislator Archer

No, it should be in the resolution.

Chairman Lopez

In the resolution.

Legislator Archer

Yep. Thanks for the catch, Laura. I don't have a copy of the package. So, I don't have the actual resolution,

Chairman Lopez

I don't either.

Deputy Executive Rider

I'm looking to see if we...

Legislator Petit

Can't find it.

Chairman Lopez

Well, as we're looking for that, should we... were there any other questions for doctor Smith?

Legislator Petit

I just had one question about the contact tracing. If somebody test is test positive, and they're in some sort of group home, or whatever. The employees, if they've been in contact with them, obviously, they can still go back and forth to work other than that they're supposed to self-quarantine. I mean, are you tracing that because I'm being told one organization in particular had several of their houses throughout the county have multiple positive tests for COVID people with developmental disabilities?

Commissioner Smith

Yes. Yes, we are. Now the answer to that is yes. And are we concerned about that? Almost as a super spreader type of a condition or arrangement because of the disabilities of the individuals in the supported home. And the fact that they do require, you know, that kind of care. So, yeah, I mean, we are... they are definitely spotlighted right now by our department and state health department as well. So, we're definitely concerned about that. Yes.

Legislator Archer

If I may, I have a one or two more follow ups. One of the what would be helpful for me is in federal and state aid, we know were anticipating cuts. I know there was a hold put on some of the funding. I'm just would like to understand how you approached funding. Because I see some increases in federal funding. Some increases, I think, mostly in the federal side. Are those increases that you've already been notified? That is, that you will be receiving? I'm just trying to gauge, we still haven't gotten state cuts for 20. And so, you know, the impact of the potential state cuts, how did you move forward trying to right size your budget for 2021?

Commissioner Smith

Kristen, you will talk about that.

Kristin Carney

While we can't really not... we budgeted based on our current funding as it is. We can't anticipate cuts that we haven't been notified of. Because if we anticipate cuts, and then the cuts don't come, we've just taken away services for folks that could have been funded.

Legislator Archer

But you increase some, as well, over last year, or over this year.

Kristin Carney

Right.

Deputy Executive Rider

We haven't gotten any notification on federal aid. Sorry,

Kristin Carney

I'd have to know what you're talking about. Like, we got two new grants, the two grants we just talked about from HRI for COVID. So, yes, they're increases because they're brand new, we just got notified of them. So, if there's a specific line, you know, but it's based on current awards that we have, as of the preparation of the budget.

Legislator Archer

So, along the lines of what you received last year. Did you do any increasing even if you haven't been notified of a cut for 2021?

Kristin Carney

We did not increase all we did is budget what the current funding allocations are as of the preparation of the budget.

Legislator Archer

And did you see significant upticks in usage in all of your programs? Or because, you know, you had a period of time where, you know, it was kind of closed down, but I'm sure your programs continued to some degree. So, I didn't know if you if you saw any usage uptick or was it pretty stable compared to previous years. Just to get a flavor for how you approach that and what your experience was this year with COVID?

Deputy Executive Rider

A lot of our programs are way down. Correct, Kristen and Dr. Smith? Because we weren't... I mean, everything shifted for about five months to COVID. So, you know, TB clinics and other activities where we would normally see... people aren't out and about and doing that kind of thing. So, I don't want to simplify it. Maybe Kristin and Dr. Smith, you can speak to it. But I think mostly we're down. But we didn't carry that into 2021, necessarily, because if something happens, and there's a vaccine, or whatever else, then we could be back to where we were pre-COVID.

Legislator Archer

But how does that impact funding levels? Does that impact funding levels if there's less usage than you do in a given year?

Kristin Carney

Now, it doesn't impact funding levels. On the Department of Health side, we get funded based on time tracking our staff track their day. So, staff weren't doing their normal work. They were doing COVID related work. And COVID is also reimbursable. Under our state aid.

Legislator Archer

Would that be reimbursable Under COVID, under FEMA? Or is it reimbursable under the funding that was appropriated for that particular program.

Kristin Carney

Their regular salary is reimbursable under New York State Article Six state aid, and over time, is eligible to be reimbursed under the HRI COVID response grant we got.

Legislator Archer

So, even though they were doing COVID for a particular program, it still counts, and the funding for that program would hold for a given... for the next year.

Kristin Carney

Right.

Legislator Archer

Okay. Thank you for that clarification. I appreciate it.

Kristin Carney

Interestingly enough, we actually have some grants where the grant allowed the folks working in the grant to do COVID and still claim it under the grant.

Legislator Archer

That's great. So, you don't lose the funding level because experience was down this year because it of the close down.

Kristin Carney

Right.

Legislator Archer

Okay, great. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Deputy Executive Rider

So Kristin, 2210 IP grant, that's one of the places where both our state aid and our federal aid is up.

Kristin Carney

Right. So that was the flu money.

Deputy Executive Rider

Okay.

Legislator Petit

To answer Legislator Archer's question, I don't see anything in that resolution about a sunset clause. I don't know if Deputy County Executive Rider explained that rather than contracting out services, we would it would actually be a savings to hire the three folks. But there is not a sunset clause in there. And there's no contract

attached to it. There's a spreadsheet with costs. So, I don't know if the committee wants to...

Legislator Archer

It should be added to the resolution. Yeah. We need some language.

Deputy Executive Rider

Do you want to do that in Ways and Means, Lynn.

Legislator Archer

We could.

Deputy Executive Rider

It's already passed... I mean...

Legislator Archer

No. Yeah, we can. We should add it though. We're trying to do that for all resolutions going forward. When funding goes away, and the positions go away, we want to make sure we're able to track those. So, that's part of how we'll do that going forward. But yes, we can do it in Ways and Means.

Deputy Executive Rider

I mean, this resolution itself is amending the 2020 budget, specifically. But I understand where you're coming from. It is why we separated it into its own division.

Legislator Archer

Well, and it's in the budget. Yes, the three positions are in the budget for 2021. And I just asked for those, so, we'll make sure we get that going forward. Thanks.

Kristin Carney

I apologize for that. That's my error. I'll own that.

Legislator Archer

That's okay. Well, we'll make sure it gets fixed. Thank you.

Legislator Petit

Okay. much rather see go to [inaudible].

Chairman Lopez

You broke up a little bit.

Nettie Tomshaw

Say again, Laura.

Legislator Petit

I'm broken. That's, I said, I just rather would see me go to Ulster County positions, then. You know, contracted. Just would. So, thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Does anybody have anything else for Dr. Smith? Okay, if not, then we will move on to Commissioner Iapoce.

Deputy Executive Rider

Thank you, Dr. Smith, and Kristin, and, Tara. I don't I mean, you're welcome to stay. But I don't think it's necessary.

Chairman Lopez

Oh, yeah, no, we don't have to keep you here. If you want to want to scoot out.

Commissioner Iapoce

This is going to be riveting. So, you might want to stay.

Commissioner Smith

You don't need some moral support there, Mike?

Commissioner Iapoce

I won't take it personally.

Commissioner Smith

Well...

Commissioner Iapoce

Great presentation, by the way, we have a lot of things in common in terms of departments and the dynamics around how we operate.

Commissioner Smith

So, absolutely. That's one of the things that I really appreciate very much about my position is the support we get from your few folks. So, thank you.

Commissioner Iapoce

Excellent group of staff. Great job.

Commissioner Smith

Thank you. You too.

Chairman Lopez

Thankyou Dr. Smith.

Commissioner Smith

Bye everybody. Thank you. Bye. Bye. Sincere

Commissioner Iapoce

So, I'll just make a few very brief remarks being mindful of the time. I know that I just said very similarly to the Department of Health and Mental Health, we operate as a department that has a lot of similar dynamics and connection with carrying out our duties or responsibilities. And I'm very encouraged to report that... I think we arrived that navigating 2020, and preparing for 2021, in a very similar fashion in terms of being able to do some incredibly responsive evaluation based on what we were seeing with our activities, and our caseload, and our referrals, and our applications. To kind of react, in real time, to what we could do during 2020 and then preparing for 2021.

Commissioner Iapoce

And I think a really vital point that was brought up by Kristen and Dr. Smith and Marc was that in terms of making preparations and arriving at estimates and looking at trends. The challenge that we face is taking into consideration what we've experienced over the last seven months in terms of what the demands on our department has been under unprecedented circumstances with the real possibility that we're going to return to the volume of activity that we have previously, at some point in 2021.

Commissioner Iapoce

And I think Kristin made the point that our funding streams rely significantly on the amount of services we're providing. So, there's not necessarily a limit there. I also just want to just very quickly recognize that we have tremendous staff here, a

really great infrastructure. Our longevity around preparing these budgets and working with the Finance Department and the Executive's Office, and all of you over the years, really laid down a foundation and infrastructure for us to be able to meet these challenges.

Commissioner Iapoce

And given the size and scope of our department, we're nearly a third of the county budget with almost a third of the county workforce. So, there's a lot of people doing a lot of activities here. And I just want to make sure that I take a moment to recognize all of their effort, and their commitment to the work that they're doing. Because it's again, really vitally important. The collaboration that takes place between Finance and the Executive's Office and the other departments and us, you know, we could not have arrived at accomplishing what we have over the course of this year without that being in place.

Commissioner Iapoce

So, we always basically kind of break down our budget into a few major areas. We obviously have staffing, because we have a large number of employees. Again, just about all of our positions capture revenue streams and reimbursement from either the state or federal government with a county share. So, we're always very mindful of that. The job duties and responsibilities that we have for the positions that we have, are guided by that. So, those are the principles behind which we arrive at trying to manage staff. Because staff is going to be what drives our ability to meet the demands in terms of programs.

Commissioner Iapoce

And the next point I would make is around federal and state reimbursement. On a lot of the same similar challenges that Dr. Smith and Kristin talked about with respect to right now, you know, we have not seen any specific indications around any changes that are going to take place with regard to our federal funding. So, like Kristin mentioned, we here do the same thing. And Pete does this not because Kristen is his wife, but he does it because it's a sound fiscal practice, that we want to continue to include in our budget, what our expenditures might be, so that we can capture the funding stream that's going to be available. We don't want to arrive at not following the same trends that we would normally follow. And we have to kind of treat these last seven months, again, as unprecedented. And how do we arrive at managing going forward in anticipation of increases?

Commissioner Iapoce

Because similarly, we have had some changes that took place in our program because of the stabilization in some regards that COVID brought to the community at large. So, we're always looking at federal reimbursement, state reimbursement. We previously reported in connection with a question that I think was posed around some of our resolutions that we have been notified by the state that they are doing a 20% withholding. We're going to be monitoring that very closely to be able to arrive that being prepared for the impact of that. But reimbursements are significant. We probably in our 2021 budget, over half of it is driven by revenue streams and reimbursements.

Commissioner Iapoce

Programmatically, I just want to mention, basically the Medicaid program lives in the Department of Social Services, is what I like to say. And obviously, it provides, programmatically, health insurance to a large number of Ulster County residents. The history behind the Medicaid program is that we don't receive reimbursement for it. We actually, the state, the state pays for the program and we make a contribution that is capped. And the current cap during 2021 was approximately \$33 million. So, that's our contribution to the Medicaid program.

Commissioner Iapoce

But just to give you some context, probably the Medicaid program brings into Ulster County about \$475 million. So, of that \$475 million expended in Ulster County by Medicaid, we contribute \$33 million, and that's paid for, in shares, bi-weekly. So, we've budgeted that for 2021. There was a lot of talk at the beginning of 2020 about the possibility of the cap being adjusted. But with the advent of COVID, there weren't any further discussions about that. And our expectations is the cap is going to remain intact. But that is a big portion of what our expenditures are. But at a time like this, in a state where we live where health insurance is encouraged for everyone to be able to have an access for health insurance, it's definitely important and has been very important over the course of this time and will continue to be important going forward.

Commissioner Iapoce

Early Intervention and preschool. This is interesting, because it sort of addresses a question that Lynn asked about. This is a program where we actually did budget for an increase over our 2020 budget. And the reason for that is based on what the state set rates are, and the trends that we've seen in terms of the volume of cases. So, in order to be fiscally responsible, and taking into consideration what we've seen unfold, we did budget an increase there. And that's just something that we would

do in the normal course of business. So, we want to be transparent about that. And we would support that with the data we have, again, going into that program and looking at the volume of cases and the rates. And the rates are set by the state and the program is mandated. So, there's not a lot of flexibility with something of that nature.

Commissioner Iapoce

Our economic support programs capture a lot of different public assistance programs, including SNAP, which is Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Also, our emergency homeless and shelter benefits. Our childcare subsidy. We've unexpectedly, in some ways, seen a lot of stabilization across the spectrum of those programs with the caseload. And a lot of that has been attributable to the fact that just like the entire rest of the population, people have been able to remain where they are. We captured in terms of opportunities around our caseload, being able to have the Office of Temporary and Disability assistant and arrive at some waivers and recertification extensions. So, with regard to those kinds of cases, things have been pretty stable, fortunately

Commissioner Iapoce

One area I want to emphasize though is we have had a lot of applications, particularly around the SNAP program that didn't end up generally resulting in an increase in cases because there was other dynamics involved. Like the federal economic stimulus, the enhanced unemployment benefit. We have Project Resilience here in Ulster County that helped a lot of residents. So, these were factors that although we had up ticks resulting in twice as many applications, as we normally would experience in a month, we didn't see the case, load actually increase. But there were still a lot of work to be done in connection with those.

Commissioner Iapoce

Child and Family Services would be the last area of activity that I would mention. And there again, you know, pre-COVID, we had about 175 children in foster care, which are children that come into our care and custody. We were providing preventive services to about 220 children. Because of the fact that those placements were arrived at, and the preventive services were also approved, they remained relatively stable throughout COVID. We didn't see any significant increases or decreases there. We still continue to provide those services. We did it differently, just like we're doing this meeting differently. But we did it effectively.

Commissioner Iapoce

One area that we did see a decrease was in terms of Child Protective Services investigations. They did start to go down dramatically. And March, April, May, June. We attributed that to the fact that the school closed and a lot of children's activities were suspended. So, adults who were mandated reporters who would have generally been interacting with children, their interaction dropped dramatically. So, we did have decreases from probably an average of about 250 investigations a month to about 145.

Commissioner Iapoce

Starting in July, August, and now September, we've seen that come back up to about 200 investigations per month. So, it's starting to uptick back to where was. Schools are reopening. Other activities are being resumed. So, I think that's something again, that we watch him monitor closely. And we want to be prepared going into 2021 to meet the demands associated with that.

Commissioner Iapoce

So, that would be you know, just a summary of what drives the decisions around arriving at our budget and what the programs are and the dynamics behind it. So, myself and Pete are available for any questions that you might have.

Chairman Lopez

Thanks, Mike. Are there any questions from the committee?

Legislator Criswell

I just had a quick question. Were there any new state mandates that that you're having to accommodate?

Commissioner Iapoce

There's nothing that's arrived that has been new. I mean, a couple of the more recent ones have been around Code Blue, which is a mandate for us to be able to provide shelter to anybody in our community when the temperature is at 32 degrees or lower. Raise the age mandates, Peter, are another one. And that's with regard to 16 and 17 year olds. There hasn't been anything new arrived that though.

Chairman Lopez

What percentage of your budget is actually state mandated? Or just mandated in general? It's significant, right?

Peter Carney

I don't that number will be a large portion, Just under Medicaid alone is \$33 million out of \$117.

Chairman Lopez

Right?

Commissioner Iapoce

And early intervention or preschools and other \$19.5? Yeah, I would venture to guess that probably over \$100 million when you start to get down to the details.

Deputy Executive Rider

I was just going to say about 80%, Mike, at least plus.

Peter Carney

Yeah, that's a good estimate.

Chairman Lopez

Two thirds or more. Yeah. Wow.

Chairman Lopez

Are there any other? Any other question?

Legislator Uchitelle

Yeah. So, you'll have to forgive me if I'm, if I'm mixing up different conversations, but there is a significant so within the Department of Social Services, there's significant savings going into the next... in this budget. That's where the county was able to find... just that they had been able to balance the budget going forward, is that that's correct. Right. It was social services?

Deputy Executive Rider

Well, being the largest department, and about a third of our budget, that there was a considerable amount of savings. They did see a large amount of the retirement incentive was in the Department of Social Services.

Legislator Uchitelle

So, does this, because those were county employees, does this put a... when we... and speaking of, you know, to kind of build on the previous question, would it be fair to say that there's now a larger proportion of social services, services...like services that are being provided, whether mandated or not, that are now falling on

some of the vendors that we work with rather than on county employees, since we're, it doesn't proportionately mean that we're now more reliant on vendors?

Commissioner Iapoce

No, I wouldn't say that's how I would characterize that, Abe. I would say that a couple of other dynamics around our staffing that are important to keep in mind. Marc alluded to the fact that we have captured savings, for the benefit of the county, with regard to people electing the retirement incentive option. So, we are having a number of positions defunded.

Commissioner Iapoce

But to the degree that as a large department, given the number of our staff, we generally were around an eight to 10% vacancy rate, traditionally, over the course of the last several years. And this is not unusual, given the number of staff that we have. So, with the impact of the staff having retired, we're going to definitely keep that vacancy rate lower. So, we're going to try to make sure that we have all of our positions staffed. And we are very closely monitored the volume of our cases. So, in as much as we're prepared, going into 2021, for what we anticipate to-be our ongoing workload, I don't see that we're going to be arriving at the expectation.

Commissioner Iapoce

And for mandated services, quite frankly, we can't pass those off to service providers or vendors to do. We have the legal obligation to provide those services. We also with respect to some of the contracts we have with service providers to assist us, have reduced some of those contracts. But it's all been, you know, I can honestly tell you all very thoughtfully done. With very careful consideration of where our caseloads are. And what our ability is going to be to manage those caseloads remaining fully staffed with the number of staff that we do have in our budget. So, you know, I can sit here right now after a lot of effort being expended by the staff here, Finance, the Executive's Office, I'm confident that we can continue to meet our mandated obligations.

Deputy Executive Rider

And Mike brought up in his kind of presentation, he talked about some waivers and other things that OTDOT has put out. Some of which is like a face to face interview requirement for anything. So, now staff are able to do these things on Zoom. And it's honestly made it a lot more efficient. And we don't anticipate those waivers of those requirements going away anytime, especially in 2021. But quite frankly, I don't see OTDOT going back to the way things were pre-COVID, ever.

Commissioner Iapoce

Yeah. And I think Marc, just to expand on that. I kind of mentioned them quickly as basically eligibility waivers and recertification extensions. So, OTDA has arrived at implementing those during 2020. They also implemented an online application process which was already in their pipeline pre-COVID. So, very consistent with Marc said, I think we're prepared to realize better efficiencies with regard to processing some of the work that we do. So, I think that's going to allow us to be able to arrive at handling the impact of the reduced staffing. Particularly with a lot of our economic support programs, and the application recertification and eligibility determination process. One example is we used to previously have to do face to face interviews. We no longer have to do that. And that has been a waiver that has been arrived, that's currently implemented. And the expectation is that it's going to remain in place for 2021.

Legislator Uchitelle

So, I appreciate that. And I absolutely recognize, you know, the immense effort that's gone into to making this work, and you know, getting us to a place with the budget and staffing levels that we need to be. You know, my concern, and I'm sure that this is a concern that you share as well, is just that with, you know, with some of the unexpected things that the contingencies that we might need to plan for when it comes to funding sources. Some of those funding sources, whether it's from the state or from the federal government, were they not to come through, wouldn't just hit us, they would also hit some of the other some of the, you know, vendors that we work with for some of the other contracts. So, we might end up not only having a budget crunch on our sources of funding. But also a... we could even be in a situation where we have an inability of a vendor to fulfill a contract, because they're no longer able to stay afloat because of other general operating funds that they're not receiving. And I just... I'm sure that you're thinking about those, you know, externalities and contingencies. And, you know, I appreciate that. And it's something that I also, you know, weighs heavily on me.

Commissioner Iapoce

Understand. Thank you. I mean, it's a very valid point. And again, a lot of the service providers that we engage with and collaborate and have contracts, have other revenue sources that come into their organizations, either directly, from other clients, or from other government sources. So, I think we're all going to be making adjustments. And we're going to continue to have very close conversations and monitor what we're seeing. But you know, certainly are aware of that, and appreciate your recognition of it.

Legislator Uchitelle

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Do we have anything else?

Legislator Archer

Just one quick one? If I may, thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Yeah, absolutely.

Legislator Archer

Yeah, the COVID has really kind of forced us all to look at how we operate and do things differently. I'm happy, you know, I'm happy to hear that some of those things have been beneficial to your group and allowing you to do Zoom online services. I guess my biggest concern is, and we don't know, is if the state starts to say that you can no longer do that anymore. So, you know, whatever efforts we can do to help support and push the state to really think about these. Because this is really about efficiencies. Right? And still being able to deliver mandated programs in a different way. So, I guess my, I think we could say that across the, across government, this has opened our eyes to a lot of different things. But if there's anything that happens in the year, and we can help in any way, let us know. Because I think we need to start looking at how we do business in a very different way. So, the work that you're doing here, it's appreciated. So, thank you.

Commissioner Iapoce

Thank you, Lynn. I mean, I think part of the ongoing challenge, one of the reasons and Dr. Smith started to allude to this. I think when Al asked the question about contact tracing that Marc eventually expanded on is that, you know, we've seen things unfold in sort of a way that has required us to respond to these unexpected circumstances, you know, as reasonably as possible, you know, in order to keep people safe in order to continue to provide services.

Commissioner Iapoce

From the Human Services perspective, one of the challenges, we want to still sustain the human beings in the Human Services process. And we have to be really thoughtful and really careful to continue to be able to do that safely and securely. And part of what I think Ulster County is done, in an incredibly successful way, around workforce reallocation, and redeployment. Not so much workforce

reduction, yes, there has been a reduction. But we here Department of Social Services, given the number of people we remained open during the entire COVID pandemic. We're essential services, so, we never closed. But we were able working with other county departments under the guidance of the Executive and Finance and IS to deploy a lot of people remotely who have been able to work effectively. I think that's also kept us as a staff and our clients safe. And that's why we've been at that 1% rate, which is almost miraculous, when you consider the number of people that are circulating and transactions that take place.

Commissioner Iapoce

But there is definitely momentum about being able to reconnect and bring people back in touch and especially emphasize it in the context of our vulnerable populations of children and adults. That not as much as it's not possible for those individuals and families to be transacting conversations electronically, like we are, but you know, being there and seeing for ourselves and being in touch.

Commissioner Iapoce

I mean, I think the Project Resilience, food delivery, that contact of physically delivering the food was so meaningful to so many people who otherwise felt isolated. And so many of our vulnerable clients are dealing with really significant issues around mental illness, mental health, substance abuse, trauma. And that trying to, you know, keep intact, or restore some contact, but we're trying to do that very thoughtfully. So, appreciate your observation and support around trying to strike that balance.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Do we have anything else? Any other questions? Anybody want to share thoughts comments? No? Okay, well, very good. Thank you so much Commissioner Iapoce. You know, you always do an incredible job. Yeah, over the past number of years. I always appreciate you coming in, sharing the budget with us, and taking our questions. So, thanks so much.

Commissioner Iapoce

Always available, Chairman. I do enjoy it. So, anytime that you want to hear from us here, we're here. Thank you so much for the invitation. Thanks, Marc.

Legislator Bruno

Thank you all.

Legislator Uchitelle

Thanks.

Chairman Lopez

Yeah. Is there anything else that anybody wants to bring before the committee?

Legislator Bruno

Let's make a motion to adjourn.

Legislator Uchitelle

Second.

Chairman Lopez

Second. All in favor.

Committee Members

Aye. (5-0)

Chairman Lopez

Very good. Thank you everyone. Stay safe. Be well.