

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES
January 15, 2008

Present:

R. Parete L. Petit
P. Terpening K. Ronk
J. Roberti
T. Briggs

UCMHD: M. Beckman, E. Brown
UCHD: D. Palen
County Attorney: B. Havranek

Excused: J. Stoeckeler

Public: Richard Engnath

Chairman Parete called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

1. The Chair appointed J. Roberti as Deputy Chair of the Committee
2. Bea Havranek, First Assistant County Attorney, discussed options available to the Committee regarding a smoking prohibition on all County owned or leased property. Havranek asked the Committee to consider whether they wanted to pursue a Local law or a mend the current County policy. She indicated that among the difficult issues to address will be enforcement and penalties for violations of a local law. Following discussion of the issue, a subcommittee was formed to develop a recommendation regarding how the county should proceed, and report back to the Committee. The subcommittee consists of Legislators Briggs and Ronk, Committee Chairman Parete, Bea Havranek and a representative from the Ulster County Mental Health Department (UCMHD). The Mental Health Department is included in the subcommittee because they have to comply with stringent tobacco free regulations by July of 2008. The Mental Health Department has begun its planning process in order to meet the July deadline.
3. The Committee agreed to change the regular meeting time for monthly Health Committee meetings to the second Thursday following the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the full Legislature. The meetings will commence at 6:30 PM in the County Office Building (COB).
4. M. Beckman provided brief overview of the UCMHD. He offered to schedule an orientation for all legislators. It was agreed that the orientation will be held on February 21, 2008 at 5:15 in the COB. The orientation will cover the roles and responsibilities of the department and the services provided within the Ulster County mental hygiene system.
5. M. Beckman described new initiatives the Department is pursuing. He advised the Committee that the Department is working to improve client engagement to facilitate better treatment outcomes in less time. To this end we are working to ensure assessment appointments can be offered to consumers within 5 business days and treatment can commence within 10 business days of the completed assessment. Additionally, we are implementing clinical practice standards developed in the Spring of 2007 to ensure consumers are getting appropriate levels and amounts of treatment. A recent initiative involves collaboration with the Institute for Family Health. This initiative will provide access to primary care physicians for the 20% of UCMHD adult consumers who have no primary care doctor. Additionally, this initiative will result in destigmatizing services for mental health clients by moving their physical health care and some medication management out of the mental health clinic.
6. The Committee approved a resolution to amend the 2008 County budget to correct personnel lines to accurately reflect allocation of positions within the UCMHD budget. The resolution is budget neutral. The resolution was moved by P. Terpening, seconded by T. Briggs and passed unanimously.
7. The Committee approved a resolution to appoint Theresa Pabon to the Community Services Board. The resolution was moved by P. Terpening, seconded by T. Briggs and passed unanimously.
8. Health Director Dean Palen provided a brief overview of the UCHD. He explained the different programs offered and the impact they have on the County. He extended an invitation to committee members to visit his office and learn more about the Health Department.
9. The Committee approved a resolution to transfer monies from the a WIC grant to purchase a van for the program. The resolution was moved by P. Terpening, seconded by T. Briggs and passed unanimously.

10. The Committee approved a resolution to accept a grant from the NYS Department of Health to implement a program relating to the prevention of obesity in children aged 5 to 11. The resolution was moved by P. Terpening, seconded by T. Briggs and passed unanimously.
11. Mr. Richard Engnath, Founder of HTLV National Registry addressed the committee about the HTLV virus is not publicized in the U.S. HTLV is related to HIV but is slower less aggressive and fewer will get the disease. There are only three or four states tracking the disease but they are not tracking correctly. There is no literature available for STD clinics. HTLV could be screened at same time as HIV. Director Palen assured the committee and Mr. Engnath that a letter to the appropriate State and Federal Officials was nearing completion and that he has discussed this issue with several doctors in the state. Mr. Engnath has been working with Congressman Hinchey, Assemblyman Cahill and US Senator Hillary Clinton
12. Chairman Parete announced that the next Committee meeting in February will take place at Golden Hill Healthcare Center.
13. Motion to adjourn by Legislator Terpening, Second by Legislator Briggs – motion to adjourn passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 8:45PM

Respectfully submitted,

Edward J. Brown, Ph. D.
Deputy Director, Ulster County Mental Health Department