

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Health and Human Services Committee

DATE: March 4, 2010

TIME: 6:30 P.M.

PLACE: UCOB, 6th Legislative Chambers

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Frey, Legislators Rob Parete, Harris, Petit, Briggs, Stoeckeler

LEGISLATOR EXCUSED: Dean Fabiano

OTHERS ATTENDING: Legislator J. Provenzano, Marshall Beckman Deputy County Exec., Roberto Rodriguez Commissioner DSS, P. Jelacic, DSS, J. Jones, IS, M. Knudsen DSS, L. Carlson DSS, S. Warman DSS, R. Wood DSS, M. Iapoce DSS, LWV Lee Cane, Nicole Tucker, Nettie Tomshaw Legislative Employee

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Frey at 6:30 PM.
- Attendance
- Chairman Frey stated the minutes have been updated and asked that the record state the request for more detailed conversation of committee meeting minutes.
- A motion by Legislator Petit was made to accept the amended February 4, 2010 Committee Meeting Minutes, seconded by Legislator Parete, all were in favor, Carried.
- Chairman Frey welcomed Commissioner Rodriguez along with his department heads in presenting DSS update to the committee.
- Around the room introductions.

Commissioner Department of Social Services Roberto Rodriguez presentation:

Commissioner Rodriguez thanked the committee for the opportunity to present his 2009 DSS update. Provided hand out of presentation to all members (attached and will provide to all 33 Legislator's) Overview of how Social Services have transitioned from a Welfare Agency to a Value Creating Agency - A Human Services Enterprise - from generational dependency to situational dependency/support which will be evident throughout the presentation.

Mission: To assist individuals and families to gain self sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives pursuant to mandated programs funded by Federal, State and County funds.

Myths of Yesterday: Social Services people stay on welfare for generations, abuse the system, are undeserving and lazy. Also, people come to UC because we are easy and people on public assistance do not make good neighbors - these are all myths of the past and not relevant to our situation today.

FACTS -Temporary Assistance:

- Case Trends Down: 2009 = 1617 people on temporary assistance = 6% of caseload (3% if family assistance component removed) (1997= 7000 cases, 2007= 2240 cases)
- Limited to 60 month assistance time frame and must develop a self-sufficiency plan as a condition of support
- Basic grant for temporary assistance for an individual is \$414/mo. - generally paid directly for shelter, utilities - balance left to the individual - being \$100 or less.
- 1-bedroom apt. currently in Ulster County \$934/mo., 2-bedroom approaching \$1100/mo. (note - starting to stress our ability to attain self-sufficiency due to lack of available jobs and housing cost)
- All recipients are thoroughly screened and must develop an employment plan
- Job referrals are provided
- Must work a minimum of 30 volunteer hours and or be involved in some educational or therapeutic activity
- Under Federal and NYS law, people have the freedom to relocate without restriction or residential requirement
- All counties have same eligibility rules and procedural federal guidelines
- Work with customers in non-judgmental manner, efficient and always within the law
- Most customers today are in need of a "one-time assistance" for rent, pay for child care or supplemental food budgeting so they can continue to work - (HEAP, Food Stamp & Medicaid are primary areas)

2008 Economic Melt-down: Heap, Food Stamp and Medicaid caseloads all increased significantly- 1st time working clients needing assistance. Major trends and regulatory changes past 2 years- eligibility and access to support benefits, increased workloads in all areas, electronic applications - thus saw a new type of client - employed!

- In 2008 Medicaid asset test went up from \$2500 to \$13K resulting in more people eligible for Medicaid - In January 2010 the asset test was eliminated - thus even more people eligible.
- State made aggressive efforts to increase enrollment in Medicaid (specifically for children), Food Stamp enrollment (increased by 1 Million people across state), Heap waivers in place to allow more eligible customers.
- Future electronic site for all programs - Mybenefits.gov - currently food stamp pilot program Ulster County participates in has no face to face contact - processed on line. Come April no face to face for Medicaid - potential to increase of case loads - same level of staffing.

Legislator Harris - Q: Are there provisions - locations where public can access terminals to electronically apply on line? A: Commissioner Roberto Rodriguez meeting with Supervisors to discuss changes. Attaining lap tops with offsite capability, introduced process to Pine Hill 2-3 weeks ago, promoting program -informing public, deployed staff to sites - free income tax service for seniors.

Management Team / Employees: DSS consists of 10 Managers - Commissioner, Deputy, Directors, Coordinators and Attorney and divided into 9 Divisions/Units totaling 331 employees.

Divisions/Units Include: Administration, Children's & Family Services, Coordinated Children's Services, Legal Division, Public Health Insurance Program, Temporary Assistance - Daycare - Employment, Home Energy Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Early Intervention/Preschool Special Education Division.

2009 Service Profile: (3 year comparison, 2007, 2008 & 2009) Individuals by Program, Population by Gender, Population by Age Group, Case Statistics.

- 50%+ of overall services apply to women with children and seniors
- Family Assistance is Federally funded, Safety Net is County funded
- Safety Net is 50% State, 50% County which is then passed on to town & villages.
- Case Statistics 2009; 47% Medicaid, 24% Food Stamps, 17% HEAP, 6% Services, 3% Family Assistance, 3% Safety Net

Legislator Petit - Q When does the Safety Net assistance take over - in relation to the 5 year mandate - does Safety Net pickup after the 5 years? A Marijane Knudsen; - A family is allowed to have federal assistance for 60 months, after that it goes into safety net mode - temporary assistance.

Chairman Frey - Q How long can a customer stay on Safety Net? A Knudsen; - There are no dead lines. Q - How long do they stay on assistance - trends, 2 or 5 years? A - Knudsen; Temporary assistance is evolving - the goal is self-sufficiency which is what we always work towards from day one. Q - Safety Net Breakdown? A Rodriguez; 50% towns and villages, 50% state - only county in NYS that passes cost on to town & villages. Process is county pays upfront then reconciles with towns and villages.

Sources of Revenue: Federal, State, Other Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) & Local Share. (4 year comparison 2007-2010) 2009 estimated - year not closed yet and includes Stimulus Funding, 2010 estimate)

Total Budget for: 2007 \$92,121,960 / 2008 \$101,381,364 / 2009 \$103,176,436 / 2010 \$109,940,378

Medicaid Expenditures: (2008 \$248,647,161.00 vs. 2009 \$280,776,585.00) includes Nursing Home, Home Care, LTHHC, Hospital, Clinics, Drugs, Physicians, Transportation, Dental, Sickroom Supplies, Lab / X-ray, Child Institution Medication, Other Practitioners, Therapist, Appl./Eyeglasses, Hospice Services, Case Management, Pre Paid MA Plan, Others, HMO, Local Transportation, Local Third Party Health Ins., Adjustments - IGT.

- Medicaid - added value and value to the county.
- \$30 Million county pays in Medicaid, the county receives back reimbursement of \$280 Million Dollars that goes back into the providers who employ and provide services to the constituents of Ulster County.
- For now, County Medicaid spending exceeding \$30 Million Dollars, the State takes care of - changes coming.

Ulster County Top Medicaid Providers: (2008 \$56,294,969 vs. 2009 \$66,181,767) Hospitals= Benedictine & Kingston. Skilled Nursing Facilities = UC Infirmary/Golden Hill, Tenbroeck Commons, Hudson Valley Rehab & Ext. Care. Clinics = UC Mental Health, Institute For Family Health. Personal Care = Ulster County Home Health Services. Home Nursing= WILLCARE. HCBS-Waived Services = Ulster Greene ARC. Drugs & Supplies = Eckerd-Rite Aid, Wallgreens, Dedricks. Managed Care = MVP, Hudson Health Plan, Well Care, GHI.

Recoveries and Fraud Prevention: Child support enforcement collections 2009 - \$18,443,854.00
Special Investigations Unit - Back End Detections (BED), Front End Detections (FEDS), Computer Matches, SIU Arrests, Child Support Enforcement Arrests, Family Court Sentencing, Family Court Arrests, DA Warrants.

- Child Support - \$17 million went back to single parents (\$10 million went to non DSS clients)
- Child Support - \$1.2 million came back to DSS (reimbursement for benefits county fronted)
- BED & FEDS - Sole purpose is to intercept, screen and prevent fraudulent activity
- Child Support Enforcement Arrests - 2009, 36 non-custodial parents arrested for non-payment.
- Family Court Sentencing - 2009, \$34.5K paid for past due child support.
- Computer matching capabilities - warrants for denying services.

Chairman Frey - Q Is there a national network for outstanding warrants that we use? A - Yes we have up front screening upon application and intermittent check points - labor dept., social security and NYS lottery data banks.

Legislator Petit - Q Are the individuals in the system because the children are in the system or overall purposes? A - Just for child support purposes.

Marshall Beckman - Encouraging committee to ask the hard questions and concerns - DSS large portion of budget - come budget time committee will be more knowledgeable of DSS operations. Also will present different programs each month to help dispel and clarify perception vs. fact. Also asked committee to look at big ticket items that county has control over. A list of mandated and non-mandated programs will follow. Policy opportunities to look at things like Salient program about to be up and running, excessive use of emergency rooms, people enrolled in services but who are not using the service.

Public Health Insurance Programs (Medicaid): Health insurance who qualify under Federal guidelines receive coverage for medical, dental and eye care. Eligibility based on income and specialized groups such as pregnancy, minors and seniors and within this division programs include, Chronic Care, Community Medicaid, Managed Care Medicaid, Family Health Plus and Medical Audit.

Under Susan Warman's direction we have seen the most significant comprehensive review and probably the most in depth process improvement effort in this division in a very long time.

Susan Warman Q & A Medicaid - Improvements of efficiency include, telephone service - same message on all phones, shared files, consolidated forms/programs among employees - more access to information and computer savvy, drop off mail box - no need to enter building, state approved random case reviews approx. 1 out of 5 vs. supervisor signing off on every case load. Department uses electronic imaging system for all documents. Spend down program process changed - no handling of monies. Spend down eligibility based on individual budget. Time frame to apply for Medicaid - 60 day limit, can be extended if process has begun but still not completed. 638 caseload each - twice of what the state feels is workable.

Managed Care Ins.: Four companies to choose from at regular Medicaid level, 80% of population currently enrolled. Subcontractor, Maxamus performs enrollment - located in side office. Working well - not many complaints.

Medical Audit: Biggest change - now contract with medical answering services for non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid recipients for doctor appointments - using least expensive transportation, using UCAT but not for scheduling & down the road billing by vendor - strict verification - eliminating manual billing process, fraud and schedule group pickups, more organized effort.

Legislator Petit - Q Do you have auditors come? A Yes and with the imaging system they complete reviews from Albany as well. Q Imaging in house or outsourced? A Out sourced - state funding eliminated. Department organizes documentation before being scanned. Q Are you eliminating all face to face? A That's our goal. Apply in person - application form only is available on line. Assistance available as needed - Food Stamps already face to face, Medicaid April.

Chairman Frey - Q Does random reviews help employees performance? A Yes, form process - report back to state and use tracking data as learning tool at group meetings.

Legislator Harris - Q Ratio of supervision to social worker examiners within state recommendations? A 3 to 1 ratio. Goal is to oversee 4 examiners - discussed case load distribution further.

Legislator Parete - Q Does the spend down program have a fixed rate? A No, based on Medicaid eligibility -any where from \$1 dollar to \$1000 dollars. Q Are examiners cross trained among services - easy to do business? A The first step is an application screening process - then directed accordingly. DSS reflects three state departments, Dept. of Health, Office of Temporary Assistance Disabilities and Office of Family Services where confidentially laws do not allow cross over - functions are separate.

Temporary Assistance/Economic Supports: Goal to achieve self sufficiency through economic support system including an employment plan to break down barriers.

Home Energy Assistance Program: (100% Federally Funded) HEAP which includes, regular benefit, emergency, furnace repair, furnace replacement, renter benefits, clean and tune, cooling program. Note - For this season the number of benefits is at 10,696 as of February 26, 2010.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps): (Federally known as SNAP - name change requires an act of the Legislature). Determines initial and ongoing eligibility for Food Stamps. Income Driven, federally funded (100% of benefits), applications now on line or by telephone (no face to face encounter), monthly electronic benefits issued by State - similar to an ATM card - cards can be used to purchase eligible food items at authorized food stores. Food stamp benefits can also generate Heap benefits. Case load rose 32% increasing 5788 to 7676, applications increased 28% from 4384 to 5632, Open cases 33% increase 3866 vs. 2906 in 2008, Issued \$23,948,750 in food stamp benefits (includes TA/FS) an increase of \$10,318,225 - 76% from 2008 which generated \$44,065,700 in additional economic activity for Ulster County.

Early Intervention & Preschool Special Education: NYS Health Dept. Mandated Program providing evaluations and services to children from birth through two years of age who have developmental delay, disability, or a diagnosed condition such as autism, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, etc., that puts a child at risk of developing delays. The Preschool Special Education Program is a NYS Education Department mandated program for ages 3 to 5 who are classified as preschoolers with a disability by local school districts committee for preschool special education services.

Children & Family Services: To enable individuals and families to live safely and independently within their home and community - to provide protection, rehabilitation, permanency planning and adoptive

services to children. The program includes: Child Protection Services Unit, Family Violence Unit, Intake Unit, NEXIS Unit, Mandated Preventive Unit, Foster Care/Adoption Unit, Adult Services Unit.

Coordinated Children's Services: This unique intensive treatment unit allows the county to avoid costly institutional placement of high-risk youngsters and to achieve successful outcomes while maintaining service dollars in our local community. Services include, Foster Care Placement Intervention Unit (FPI) and Multi-Systemic Therapy Unit (MST).

Sub-Committee Announcement / Creation:

Chairman Frey announced the creation of two new sub-committees; Golden Hill and Department of Social Services - both having equal representation and noted Roberts Rules of Order for committee selection. Finalizing of committee members, recommendations and plan of action will be discussed at next meeting.

-Golden Hill committee members: Chairman Walter Frey, Co- Chair Mary Sheeley, pending appointments Cynthia Wadnola, Lou Kirshner, 3 Minority and 3 Majority appointments. Purpose - Review all aspects of the Golden Hill Facility - invest, privatizing, partnership - coalition - to address the future needs of the Golden Hill Facility.

-Department of Social Services committee members: Chairman Wayne Harris, Leg. Laura Petit (pending Environmental Committee outcome), Karen Spinozzi, 3 Minority and 3 Majority appointments - also asking committee democrat members if they would like to sit on committee. Purpose - Review of Federal and State Mandates of DSS vs. policies in Ulster County.

Discussion: (extensive) Legislator Parete asked for appointment qualification, clarification and purpose of 2 sub-committees. Noting - Blue Ribbon Committee & Sub-committee, Steve Kelley and 4 health care professionals which reviewed every aspect of Golden Hill which was a huge undertaking. It has everything in it one would want to know about Golden Hill to base a recommendation - infrastructure, model of care, reimbursement rates, etc. This is such a good report. Also do we know how the County Executive feels and involvement - upfront? Leg. Parete also questioned the Legislature role - to confirm recommendations made by the Executive office vs. Legislature making recommendations - not our role. Chairman Frey stated, we will use the report as a reference but also wants to expand on the report as no action was taken upon completion of previous 2008 report. Chairman Frey noted all information from all avenues is welcome and will be made public. The public is very much aware of Golden Hill and there has been expressed interest in Golden Hill. We need to get the facts together and we need action - it's the right thing for Ulster County. Leg. Petit echoed Leg. Parete's recommendation for health professionals to be named to the Golden Hill committee. Also, regardless of the outcome Leg. Petit recommended procedural and follow up guidelines to be created - to prevent the need for a third report of Golden Hill down the line. Leg. Harris would like additional discussion of committees to determine legislative role and responsibility of the county. Leg. Stoeckeler suggested having a CPA on the committee for finance recommendations, and also to have CSCA union involved - in the loop. Also, two central questions should be: 1) Policy - do we want to be in the business, and 2) What are the numbers going to be if the county is 100% involved, if a coalition or if county keeps 100 beds and privatizes 200 beds. The numbers may or may not drive the policy decision. Also consultants have industry numbers - averages - cost per Sq. Ft. etc. that can be attained in a timely manner for reference - evaluation - contract out. Leg. Briggs noted in the County Executive's State of the County address - the Executive asked the Legislature for recommendations. He also expressed opening this up for discussion will allow people to come forward and make possible proposals, etc.

Marshall Beckman noted he anticipated if the budget passed with the proposal in it, he would have to hit the ground running to complete an 8-9 month transaction process. So looking ahead Marshall already has a consultant lined up and ready to go right now. Fee is approx. \$4-7K to include, evaluation of child license, review of RFP for the sale of the license - to attract bidders, and if needed, assistance in setting up an interim management organization during the re-licensing process.

1.) Resolution Draft No. 0305, March 16, 2010: Approving The New York State Office Of Children And Family Services 2010 Resource Allocation Plan – Youth Bureau.

Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Harris, Seconded by Legislator Briggs, Unanimously in Favor, Carried.

Noting: Youth Bureau, Dept. of Aging and Veterans Affairs will now report to this committee.

2.) Resolution Draft No. 0306, March 16, 2010: Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Inter-Municipal Agreement With The City Of Kingston For The Environmental Education Program – Youth Bureau.

Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Stoeckeler, Seconded by Legislator Briggs, Unanimously in Favor, Carried

3.) Resolution Draft No. 0307, March 16, 2010: Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Inter-Municipal Agreement For The Coordinated Children’s Services School Placement Preventive Program With Ulster County Board Of Cooperative Educational Services – Department Of Social Services.

Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Stoeckeler, Seconded by Legislator Briggs, 1 abstention Frey, (On the board of BOCES) All in Favor, Carried.

4.) Resolution Draft No. 0308, March 16, 2010: Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Enter Into An Agreement With The New York State Department Of Health For Additional Funding For The Early Intervention Program Amending The 2010 Ulster County Budget – Department Of Social Services

Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Stoeckeler, Seconded by Legislator Briggs, Unanimously in Favor, Carried

5.) Resolution Draft No. 0309, March 16, 2010: Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute A Contract With The New York State Department Of Health To Continue The Immunization Action Plan – Amending The 2010 Ulster County Budget – Department Of Health.

Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Parete, Seconded by Legislator Briggs, Unanimously in Favor, Carried

- Chairman Frey thanked Commissioner Rodriguez for his presentation and noted if there are additional questions or follow ups based on the presentation to please direct in writing to Commissioner Rodriguez's attention.
- Leg. Stoeckeler wanted to formally disclose and include in the minutes that he owns rental property and may or may not come into contact with DSS clients (also stated on annual disclosure form). Chairman Frey noted he has no problem with Leg. Stoeckeler sitting on this committee.
- Marshall Beckman update on Legionella: Nothing new developing. Re-sampling 3/8/10. RFP process underway for ionization system - requiring PH levels first and other mineral input - up to \$100K most likely from contingency. Also, Health Summit held, 100 people in attendance, productive, working on a short term plan and a long term plan - smoking, diabetes - goal to put us at the top of NYS health.
- New Business:
Leg. Parete would like to create a resolution / policy for the training and maintenance of the county's Automated External Defibrillator units (AED's). (See attached comprehensive DRAFT submitted by Leg. Parete)

Adjournment:

The meeting was respectfully adjourned at 8:25 PM with a motion offered by Legislator Stoeckeler and seconded by Legislator Briggs, with all in favor, carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Walter Frey, Chairman
Health & Human Services Committee**