

**NAME OF COMMITTEE:** Health Services Committee

**DATE:** September 17, 2009

**TIME:** 6:30 PM

**PLACE:** Library Conference Room, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
County Office Building

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Parete, Legislators Joseph Stoeckeler, Philip Terpening, and Kenneth Ronk

**LEGISLATORS ABSENT:** Legislators Thomas "TJ" Briggs, Laura Petit and Joseph Roberti

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Marshall Beckman, Deputy County Executive  
Nereida Veytia, Acting Public Health Director  
Sheree Cross, Director, Residential Health Care Facilities  
Kathy Closi, Director of Nursing, Residential Health Care Facilities  
Lee Cane, League of Women Voters

1. Chairman Robert Parete called the Special Informational Hearing and committee meeting to order at 6:39 PM.

Sheree Cross explained that every year at Golden Hill, they have experienced outbreaks of seasonal flu. The staff and residences all receive vaccinations. The difference this year, is there are two vaccines - one for seasonal flu and one for swine flu. If there is an outbreak, units are closed, signs are posted and all precautions are in place.

Kathy Closi added that if someone tests positive, they recommend treatment with Tamiflu; employees would be sent home and residents would be isolated from the residents who are not ill. The facility will be checking on any changes in procedure that come from the Center for Disease Control and will implement them. All units carry hand sanitizer in their pockets and there are stations by the time clocks.

Chairman Parete noted that certain hand sanitizers contain pesticides and should be used with caution.

Regular flu shots are currently available but H1N1 is not yet available. There was discussion regarding availability of both types of vaccine.

Nereida Veytia distributed pamphlets outlining the difference between seasonal flu and swine flu and actions to take to protect yourself against the new H1N1. The focus for the community is educating everyone to know the action steps for prevention. There will be billboards with educational messages with the elderly as one of the target groups. The Department of Public

Health is planning clinics and their goal is to get the vaccine out as early as they can. Looking for distribution - challenges is getting the vaccine on time. The regular vaccine is taking a back seat to production of H1N1 vaccine. End of November is late for vaccinating for seasonal flu. Purchase is done ahead of time - partner in vaccination. People still go to primary care doctors, chain stores, pharmacies, nursing homes, etc. Office for the Aging also does flu shot clinics.

Target for H1N1 is tiered according to highest risk. The recommended groups include: pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, all people from 6 months through 24 years of age (children from 6 months through 18 years of age & young adults 19 through 24 years of age), and persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

Seniors do not always have a primary care doctor. Department of Health also does the 18 years old or younger population.

Challenges this year affect the Home Health Care Industry (hospital, health care home programs, diagnostic treatment centers, hospices). Effective August 13<sup>th</sup>, the law changed and as a pre-condition on on-going condition of employment, a person must be vaccinated. Only exemption is for medical reasons. She has worked with Brenda to keep her apprised of changes. State Hospital and Review Planning Council & The State Department of Health - regulatory body is OHAS and does the reviews, etc.

Question from Legislator Stoeckeler: does this pertain to get physical or mental health facilities. Nereida Veytia provided the regulation.

Kathy Closi said that there is a projected 30% reduction in staffing possible and they will be able to handle this.

Marshall Beckman mentioned that plans include a 40% reduction in staffing level so that they are prepared to cope with that scenario.

Nereida Vetyia basic tips for prevention are helpful there are only 5 manufacturers of H1N1. October 1<sup>st</sup> date has now been moved out. CDC will be released to the State. DOH will do a distribution. Hand out shows target tiers. Further production would go to the next tier. These guidelines will have to be followed. Those over 60 may have some immunity to the H1N1. Those younger in age demonstrated acute care and hospitalization earlier in testing. First focus is high risks groups. Intent is to vaccinate entire population.

Legislator Stoeckeler mentioned Cornell student with no pre-existing conditions. There was discussion regarding what makes a person vulnerable.

Nereida Vetyia conveyed that there are studies being done. It not only affects respiratory system but compromises the immune system. Only certain way to make determination is to consent to an autopsy. Further studies are necessary to determine the reason why.

Legislator Stoeckeler asked how the distribution would work?

Nereida Veytia explained the plan for distribution. The NYSDOH is encouraging hospitals and larger institutions to pre-register so that they have a sense of numbers. Letter has gone out to

local healthcare providers and there is concern as to whether or not all physicians will participate. The Department of Public Health has reached out to Marshall Beckman, Deputy County Executive and they have developed a plan that departments could be involved to get the work done. A media campaign is in place with "risk communications" with PSAs on radios stations, newspapers, flyers in employee mail, tv, and marked hand sanitizers in County buildings. They are also looking to put signage on the UCAT vehicles since getting the message out is critical. The Department of Public Health has worked on identifying the County role with: Emergency Communications/Emergency Management, UCAT, Ulster County Sheriff's Office, Department of Social Services and to set up points of administering vaccinations. MOUs for these points and drills have already been done. There is a human resource shortage. The Ulster County Sheriff's Office would be utilized for security in the receiving vaccines, driving, parking, The upcoming flu season has presented anticipation of the unknown and the County is aware that there are lessons to be learned and are prepared as possible for the situation.

Marshall Beckman provided that there are drills every week.

Legislator Stoeckeler asked if the Health Care Facility has a sanitizer with signage for the use of the public (i.e. visitors) at the entrance? Question asked: "Yes."

Chairman Parete stated that he is happy that they are planning mass clinics and thanked everyone for attending.

- 2. Resolution** - Amending Resolution No. 220 dated July 8, 2009 - Authorizing The Chairman To Execute An Agreement To Accept A 100% State Funded Grant For The Purchase of Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) - Amending The 2009 Ulster County Budget

Chairman Parete explained the necessity of amending the previous resolution in order to provide funding for AEDs and equipment. He spoke about Heart Safe Community Task Force Program and its efforts.

Legislator Stoeckeler motioned, seconded by Legislator Ronk to approve the resolution. All in favor.

- 3. Resolution** - Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Enter Into Agreements With The Kingston And Saugerties School Districts For The Operation Of The FACETS Program - Department Of Mental Health

Marshall Beckman spoke to the issue concerning FACETS. He mentioned certain schools have been lost due to their own budget cuts. He hopes that there will be a change with the economy but is happy that Kingston and Saugerties School Districts are continuing with this program.

Chairman Parete asked Marshall Beckman for a copy of the legal opinion regarding FACETS for the record.

Legislator Ronk motioned, seconded by Legislator Stoeckeler to approve the resolution. All in favor.

#### **4. New Business**

Marshall Beckman provided an update on the Public Health Director. They are completing the screening of the candidates and are optimistic that selection will happen soon. He thanked and expressed appreciation for the work that Nereida Veytia has been doing as the Acting Public Health Director.

#### **5. Motion to adjourn**

Legislator Ronk motioned, seconded by Legislator Stoeckeler to adjourn. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Binder  
Deputy Clerk  
Ulster County Legislature