

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: HEALTH SERVICES

DATE: MARCH 1, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Barody
Sheehan
Haskell
F. Thomas
Champagne

Representing Health Services Department:
Patricia Auer, Director
Ginelle Jones, Assistant Director, Public Health
Services
Tammie DeLorenzo, Fiscal Manager/Supervisor of
Clerical Services

Committee Members Absent:

Supervisors Tessier
Mason

Maureen Linehan, RN
Heather Benson, RN
William Thomas, Chairman
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative and
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk, Board of Supervisors
Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Supervisor Daniel Girard
Supervisor Eugene Merlino
Supervisor Alexander Gabriels III
Katy Goodman, Secretary to the Clerk

Mr. Barody called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mrs. Auer; and she distributed copies of her Agenda packet for the meeting, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mrs. Auer noted under the Pending Items on the agenda the first item was a demonstration of the Telehealth monitor and an update on the Telehealth Program. She introduced Heather Benson, RN, who she said works in the Long Term Home Health Program, and Maureen Linehan, who works in the Certified Home Health Agency. Mrs. Auer mentioned that Ms. Linehan was the nurse who was shown in the recent article in *The Post-Star* about the Telehealth Program.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Linehan, and she proceeded with the demonstration of the Telehealth monitor and how it is used by the agency's patients on a daily basis to transmit the data on the status of their health problems from their homes to the department's receiving equipment. Ms. Linehan responded to questions from the committee members on various aspects of the program throughout the demonstration. She stated the patients that are currently

on the program are those with congestive heart failure (CHF) and those with long-term lung disease.

Mrs. Sady entered the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

Ms. Linehan advised the goal of the program is to prevent frequent hospitalizations of those patients. She stated Ms. Benson had some statistics on that aspect of the program.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Benson and she said that Ms. Schaldone, Assistant Director of Patient Services for the agency, had left that information for the committee members. She apprised that last year 21% - 25% of CHF patients were hospitalized at some point, but since the start of the use of the Telemed units in November (2005) the hospitalizations had decreased to 9%. Mr. Champagne asked if the percentages were based on the number of days in the hospital. He noted that data should be compared to the number of hospitalization days for the two years prior to the program's implementation. Ms. Benson replied Ms. Schaldone would have that information. However, she said she knew data was being gathered for one of the agency's meetings to compare the number of hospitalizations of the Telemed patients before they were on the program to the number after they were on the program.

Mr. Barody stated he had asked Ms. Schaldone to provide some dollars and cents for the program's data before she went on vacation. Ms. DeLorenzo explained the statistics they were looking at now were just for episodes when a patient goes into the hospital. Mr. Barody said they also want to do an analysis of the frequency or infrequency of the agency's (nursing) visits to the Telemed patients because they will now have better information on their vital signs. Ms. Benson apprised those numbers have also decreased as the average number of visits for a CHF episode by a patient admitted to the agency was generally 12 -15. However, she said that number has probably gone down to six to eight visits. Ms. Linehan apprised they usually visit the Telemed patients twice a week the first week they are on the monitors and once a week after that and then perhaps every other week compared to the two to three visits per week that were necessary before the program began.

Mrs. Parsons entered the meeting at 9:41 a.m.; and Mr. Girard entered the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

Discussion ensued as Ms. Linehan continued the demonstration of the equipment and answered further questions on the program. Ms. Benson also demonstrated the receiver for the data and how it displays the data that is received from the patients.

Mr. W. Thomas entered the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

General discussion ensued.

At the conclusion of the demonstrations, Mr. Barody thanked Ms. Linehan and Ms. Benson and they left the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Mr. Barody noted prior to the meeting Mr. Champagne had commented about receiving the meeting agenda from Mrs. Auer via e-mail before the meeting, and he asked him to reiterate his comments for the record. Mr. Champagne stated he thought that was a very good way to handle the agenda because having the information ahead of time better prepared the committee members to discuss the agenda items during the meeting. He said he hoped in the future other department heads might also be asked to e-mail their agendas to their committee members prior to the meetings. Mr. Barody thanked Mr. Champagne for his comments. Mrs. Auer also thanked Mr. Champagne. She said if any of the committee members ever wanted more information on the agenda items before the meeting they were welcome to call her with their questions. The agenda is usually finalized on Tuesday, she added.

Review of the agenda resumed, and Mrs. Auer spoke on the status of the Fleet Management issue. She advised they are further ahead than at the last committee meeting and they are cautiously optimistic that they have a potential plan that will address the agency's needs although there were still a number of kinks to be worked out. Mrs. Auer stated they would keep the committee members updated on how things are going with the program. She noted she thought Mr. Remington (County DPW Superintendent) and his staff were committed to making the system work this time.

Mr. Haskell advised that Mr. Morehouse, (County Fleet Manager) is waiting for new software that will help to better manage the fleet. For instance, he said they will now be doing preventive maintenance on the fleet vehicles that had not been done previously. Mrs. Auer noted when a repair situation came up for one of the nurses recently it was handled in-house so the nurse did not have to take the car somewhere else to have it done. Mr. Champagne stated a vehicle rotation plan will also be put into effect wherein Mr. Morehouse will take a vehicle to the DPW shop and bring a serviced one back to the Municipal Center. However, he remarked he was not sure if one person rotating one car would maintain Health Services' total fleet. Mr. Haskell stated Mr. Morehouse was also having other DPW employees rotate cars when they go back and forth between the two locations. Mrs. Auer stated she would provide a brief report on the status of the program each month in her meeting agenda.

Concluding the Pending Items, Mrs. Auer recalled at the last committee meeting she had provided a list of the agency's Goals and Objectives for 2006 and Mr. Barody had asked the committee members to bring back any suggestions they might have on the list to this meeting. She asked if anyone had any feedback on the items. Mr. Champagne said he felt the list was right on target. Mrs. Auer advised she had discussed briefly with Mr. Barody that she would like to have some of the staff members come to the meetings a couple of times a year to showcase the work they do. The committee members offered no objection to the proposal. Mr. Haskell and Mr. Champagne suggested presentations be made at every committee meeting as long as time permitted. Mrs. Auer said there was another issue they would be handling at the next committee meeting so she would not have any staff reports then.

Pursuant to the New Business items on the agenda, Mrs. Auer presented requests for approval

of resolutions relative to the agency's activities. Details on the requests were provided in the agenda.

The first request was to authorize an agreement with Joseph F. Hickey, Respiratory Therapist, to provide Respiratory Therapy services for specific patients in the Long Term Home Health Care Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented. The necessary resolution was authorized for the next board meeting.

The second request was to authorize an agreement with Geraldine P. Torrance, Registered Dietician, to provide nutritional consultation services to select patients in the Certified Home Health Program and the Long Term Home Health Care Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented. The necessary resolution was authorized for the next board meeting.

Next, Mrs. Auer advised an agreement with Franklin County Public Health was needed to provide speech therapy services for a child in a split custody situation who spends time in both counties. Mrs. Auer explained they did not have a choice about this agreement as the Early Intervention Program is an entitlement program.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented. The necessary resolution was authorized for the next board meeting.

The last resolution request was to authorize renewal of the grant agreement (for \$2,500) with the New York State Department of Health Division of Family Health for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented. The necessary resolution was authorized for the next board meeting.

Mrs. Auer stated at the next committee meeting they would like to provide some information on their Pandemic Flu Planning efforts. She advised the (State Health) Commissioner held a press conference last week on the plan and they have received the 400-page Pandemic Flu Plan from the state. Mrs. Auer noted the Avian Flu will also be discussed.

Mrs. Auer spoke on the Rabies Program Report. She stated the report has been provided to the committee members monthly but she would ask if they could begin to provide it on a quarterly

basis instead unless there was something unusual to report. Mrs. Auer mentioned this was an effort to streamline the paper process. Mr. Barody and the committee members concurred with the request.

Mr. Barody stated although the issue of the recent windstorm and power outage was not in the scope of this committee he had some concerns about such situations after the discussion yesterday in another committee meeting. (See the minutes of the February 28, 2006 DPW Committee meeting for details.) He noted for instance the Red Cross did not have enough cots and he was concerned that in general there was not an emergency preparedness plan to handle any kind of a catastrophe such as the recent ammonia leak in Queensbury and some recent vehicle rollover accidents or a mass event on the Northway. Mr. Barody commented perhaps the County did have such a plan but he was not comfortable that there was one in place. Even a significant event in New York City could involve the Civic Center like Hurricane Katrina did the Superdome, he added. Mr. Barody stated it seemed there should be a plan somewhere in the County's system that included the Health Services Department. He remarked to Mr. Haskell, Chairman of the County Facilities Committee, that he did not think this issue was for that committee or this one to handle but a plan was needed.

Mr. Haskell stated he thought there should be a joint meeting with John Farrell, Director of Civil Defense for the County. He said he had felt the Town of Thurman was prepared for disasters but in the aforementioned windstorm the town residents could not leave the town by road to go to Warrensburg for shelter. He said he would be presenting Patricia Tatich, Director of the County Planning & Community Development Department, with a letter today relative to seeking some grants to either build or update facilities for use in disasters. Mr. Haskell stated he thought it would be helpful for this committee and the County Facilities Committee to have a joint meeting with Mr. Farrell and Marvin Lemery, Administrator, Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Department/Fire Coordinator.

Mr. W. Thomas advised there are meetings held quarterly on emergency preparedness that do involve Health Services. At his request Mrs. Auer spoke on the meetings. She stated Mr. Farrell, Mr. Lemery and Sheriff Cleveland attend the meetings. In reply to Mr. Barody's query if there was a (disaster) plan in place the committee members could see, Mrs. Auer said Mr. Farrell has the County's Comprehensive Emergency Plan on file that was prepared by a consultant. Ms. Jones advised there was a Public Health Plan which the State Department of Health (DOH) required them to prepare that the committee members could review. The plan takes up three notebooks, she added. Ms. Jones explained at the emergency response preparedness meeting they discuss any updates to the Public Health Program or activities DOH is asking them to do, communications plans, etc. In addition, she said law enforcement, Mr. Farrell, EMS representatives and the Red Cross provide updates so everyone knows what is going on. Ms. Jones explained their plan is an Annex to the aforementioned Comprehensive Emergency Plan that Mr. Farrell has on file.

Mr. Merlino entered the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

Continuing, Ms. Jones said in order to receive the grant funds they have been awarded they have to jump through a lot of hurdles and they expend a very large percent of Mrs. Auer's, the part time staff and her time on the grant requirements. Relative to the question if they have cots to put in shelters, she said they do not, but they do put time into dealing with emergency response and preparedness issues. Ms. Jones advised as part of those efforts they have purchased a triage tent that will help Health Services plus EMS and law enforcement during disasters.

Mr. Barody asked what their communications plan was if all telephone service was out. Ms. Jones replied the Comprehensive Plan covered the overall communications plan and the department's plan was in the aforementioned Annex to that plan. She said the committee members were welcome to review their plan and it included how they would notify the public through the media and how to contact people who are blind and deaf. Mr. W. Thomas commented the quarterly meetings were very important as a lot of the questions being asked were being addressed by those who participate in the meetings. However, he said perhaps the agencies needed to provide the County with more details on what takes place at the meetings. Mrs. Auer advised they had also used their emergency response grant funds to purchase satellite phones which they have shared with EMS and fire for such emergencies as forest fires.

Mr. Dusek and Mr. Gabriels entered the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Concluding the agenda, Mrs. Auer requested an executive session to discuss a union negotiations issue.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to declare executive session pursuant to Section 105(e) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 10:21 a.m to 10:35 a.m.

Committee reconvened.

Mr. Barody announced that no action was taken during executive session.

There being no further business, on motion by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Barody adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katy Goodman, Secretary to the Clerk