

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: HEALTH SERVICES

DATE: MAY 2, 2007

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS MASON	REPRESENTING THE HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT:
SHEEHAN	PATRICIA AUER, DIRECTOR
HASKELL	SHARON SCHALDONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOME
F. THOMAS	CARE
TESSIER	GINELLE JONES, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PUBLIC
CHAMPAGNE	HEALTH SERVICES
SOKOL	TAWN DRISOCLL, PROVISIONAL FISCAL MANAGER
	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
	JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF
	ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
	SUPERVISORS CAIMANO
	KENNY
	AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Mason called the meeting of the Health Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Auer, Director of Health Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Beginning with the Pending Items portion of the agenda, Ms. Auer explained that Lisa Manzi, a representative from Congresswoman Gillibrand's staff, would be visiting her Department on Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. to review the Telehealth Program. She informed the Committee that Chairman Thomas had received a letter from Congresswoman Gillibrand informing that funding had been requested, as a result of the Department's request, for the Point of Care Initiative.

Mr. Caimano apprised that he had also spoken with Senator Elizabeth Little and Assemblywoman Theresa Sayward to try and secure funding for the Point of Care Initiative from other outside sources. He stated that although the Budget would be heavily restricted for 2008, funding for the Point of Care Initiative would be included in the County Budget if it could not be gained from other sources.

In other news regarding the program, Ms. Auer stated, her Department would be instituting care for other disease entities, besides CHF (Congestive Heart Failure) and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), with the goal being to reduce both hospitalizations and health care costs. Ms. Auer introduced Sharon Schaldone, Assistant Director of Home Care, to further discuss the initiative, and future goals of the program. Ms. Schaldone apprised that in an effort to further this

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goal, they had worked with the visiting nurses to develop an evaluation program intended to identify patients at high risk for hospitalization upon their initial visit, scoring them according to health risk. She said that they would be front loading visits for the high risk patients and those targeted in the evaluation process would receive a home monitor regardless of their diagnosis. The characteristics of the targeted patients would include CHF, COPD, cases of frequent falls and those taking extensive amounts of medication, Ms. Schaldone explained. She said that they would begin in-servicing nursing and physical therapy staff within the month of May to begin this process.

Ms. Schaldone distributed three handouts to the Committee members, *copies of which are on file with the minutes*, the first of which she explained was the Telemedicine Demonstration Program Annual Evaluation for 2006. She advised that the document detailed the projections made by the Warren County Public Health Department in their initial grant proposal and the outcome for 2006, which were as follows:

- 1) Projected: Provide comprehensive disease management to chronically ill patients with CHF and COPD totaling 75 within the first year with 17% being Medicaid as the primary payer.  
Outcome: The unduplicated count for CHHA (Certified Home Health Agency), was 169 and LTC (Long Term Care), was 22. This totaled 191 unduplicated clients served and was double the number of clients projected. Medicaid was the primary payer for 34 of these patients equaling 18%, which was 1% higher than the number projected.
- 2) Projected: Reduce nursing visit frequency by 25% in CHHA and 50% in LTC (Medicaid population).  
Outcome: Nursing visits per episode decreased from 10-20 to 5-9, a decrease of 50% in CHHA. The number of visits to patients in LTC program had not decreased as the average number of visits was two per month. The daily oversight increased patient compliance as evident by the decreased hospitalizations.
- 3) Projected: Reduce hospitalizations by 50%.  
Outcome: The overall percentage of hospitalization while on the telemedicine program averaged about 12% over a 12-month period. The hospitalization rate for the diagnoses ran about 38-40% prior to the telemedicine program. Of the 22 patients in the LTC program, 12 had less hospitalizations, while seven had one or two more per client and three had none.

Ms. Schaldone stated that although it might seem that the clients were receiving less care due to the decreased visits, that was not accurate as they were receiving daily contact through the Telemedicine Program. In addition, she noted, the implementation of this program had greatly decreased costs as they were paid one lump sum for each 60-day period regardless of the number of visits performed. By cutting the number of visits rendered, she added, the nurses were able to visit those clients in need of care.

Ms. Schaldone stated that the Telemedicine Program implemented in Warren County had been very successful and they had seen accomplishments in all projected areas. The clients adherence to the plan of care was evident by the daily monitoring of the vital signs and their stability, she said. Ms. Schaldone expressed that the most gratifying aspect of the program had been the satisfaction of the clients and their families, along with that of the nursing staff.

Mr. Haskell noted that it was very difficult to determine the amount of savings realized by the implementation of the Telemedicine Program, although he said he would assume they were astronomical as hospitalization costs were significant. Ms. Auer agreed and she added that the costs of emergency room visits were also considerable. Ms. Schaldone stated that one of the areas studied by the grant was the overall savings to Medicare, resulting from the Telemedicine Program. She noted that the use of the health monitor was not currently a reimbursable expense; however, through the grant process, this matter was being researched for the possibility of becoming one.

Moving to the second handout, the Free Care Fiscal Report, Ms. Schaldone advised that funds totaling \$9,236.48 had been spent for the month of February. She stated that of this amount, \$1,778.52 was used for care given to an individual with pending Medicaid insurance and they expected to recover the home care cost when the coverage was approved. Ms. Schaldone reminded the Committee that as a certified agency they were required to provide 3.3% of their operating costs in free care. She apprised that based on the figures projected for 2006, they would be required to provide approximately \$159,000 in free care; Ms. Schaldone added that for the months of January and February a combined total of \$19,206 in free care had been provided. She noted that if the services rendered continued at this rate, they would be well below the required level at the end of 2007.

Mr. Haskell asked what the consequences were if the 3.3% requirement of free services was not met and Ms. Schaldone replied that she was unsure of the exact repercussions; however, she said that she assumed there was some type of fine. Ms. Auer stated that they should not begin to worry about this limit just yet because it was still early in the year and one large incident could make quite an impact on the total.

Ms. Schaldone noted that the third page of the documents she had distributed was a copy of a Letter to the Editor printed in *The Post Star*, which praised the work of the traveling nurses and their performance, despite the Municipal Center fire on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Auer stated that this praise was certainly deserved and it was nice to see that the writer of the letter had specifically named a few of the nurses that had visited her home.

Discussion ensued.

Returning to the pending items portion of the agenda, Ms. Auer apprised that attached to the agenda was a copy of the monthly activities and outreach educational efforts provided in connection with the flu pandemic planning efforts. She apprised that although they continued to work towards

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a master plan in the event of a flu pandemic, no direction had been received from the State of New York on what should be done if something of this nature should occur.

Mr. Haskell apprised that Barbara Orton, Bioterrorism Coordinator, had made an educational presentation on the possibility of a flu pandemic at the Thurman Town Hall recently and he said that he wanted to thank her for her efforts. He stated that the presentation had lasted for approximately one half hour and had served to educate the public without scaring them. Ms. Auer said that Mrs. Orton was an educator first and foremost, with a mission to educate the public without frightening them and she did a wonderful job. Mr. Haskell added that the presentation had been very informative and he wanted to thank Mrs. Orton for her efforts. Ms. Auer noted that she would be sure to pass along Mr. Haskell's appreciation.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Auer stated that they would not be presenting the Annual Report at the meeting due to time constraints. She said that it seemed as if each month their agenda included a number of items requiring action, which did not leave adequate time to address both the Annual Report and regular business. Despite time constraints, a tremendous amount of work had been performed by the Department's staff to compile the report, which must be accepted by resolution, Ms. Auer apprised. She stated that she and her staff also enjoyed the opportunity to showcase their programs, and they felt it was important for the Health Services Committee, as well as the entire Board of Supervisors, to understand the comprehensiveness of the Department.

Ms. Auer apprised that a power point presentation, as well as a written report, had been prepared; however, they were open for suggestions as to how the Committee felt the information would be most valuable. She said that if the Committee preferred that the Report be presented as it had in the prior year, a two hour meeting would be required for the following month. As an alternate option, Ms. Auer suggested that the Annual Report be presented in sections over the next several months, or she said she could provide each of the Committee members with a copy of the Report for their review and a meeting could be held for the Committee members to question anything they found unclear. She said that the Committee might also consider scheduling a special Health Services Committee meeting to be devoted solely to the review of the Annual Report. Ms. Auer stated that her goal was to make the review of the Report informative and interactive, rather than just a long meeting.

Discussion ensued.

It was the consensus of the Committee that copies of the Annual Report should be distributed to the Committee members for their review prior to the next meeting, and a power point presentation scheduled to highlight the important service and fiscal factors of the Report, in the interest of time constraints.

Proceeding with the New Business portion of the agenda, Ms. Auer stated that several resolution requests were included, the first of which was a request to authorize a contractual agreement with Tresa Scotch to provide speech therapy services.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the request for a new contract with Tresa Scotch to provide speech therapy services and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer apprised that requests for new contracts with Nicole Willis, to provide physical therapy services, and Teresa Costin, to provide occupational therapy services, were also included in the agenda as Glens Falls Hospital would no longer be offering these services.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve both requests for new contracts with Nicole Willis, to provide physical therapy services, and Teresa Costin, to provide occupational therapy services, and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *Copies of both requests are on file with the minutes.*

The next request, Ms. Auer explained, was a request to extend the grant agreement with the New York State Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for the period April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008 to allow receipt of funds in the amount of \$25,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to extend the grant agreement with the New York State Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for the period April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008 to allow receipt of funds in the amount of \$25,000 and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer referenced a request for permission to apply to the Charles R. Wood Foundation for grant funding to assist in ascertaining Point of Care Electronic Medical Records. She explained that the application asks for the cost, description and the rationale for the project, but does not allow for the application of a specific amount of funding. Ms. Auer noted that if the grant funds were awarded, the reviewing Board of Directors would decide upon the amount granted.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve the request to apply to the Charles R. Wood Foundation for grant funding to assist in ascertaining Point of Care Electronic Medical Records and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer stated that the next request was for a new contract with The Sage Colleges, allowing their nutrition students to visit and gain intern and observation experience with the Warren County WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the request for a new contract with The Sage Colleges allowing their nutrition students to visit the Warren County WIC Program to gain intern and observation experience, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

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A request for a new contract with Hudson Headwaters Health Network was included in the agenda, Ms. Auer advised, that would authorize the receipt of \$3,285 to conduct health education and outreach activities with regard to HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDs (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the request for a new contract with Hudson Headwaters Health Network and the acceptance of \$3,285 as referenced above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer stated that the next request was for approval of out-of-state travel to authorize Daniel Durkee, Health Educator, to travel to Springfield, Massachusetts to attend the National Safety Council's DDIC (Defensive Driver Instructor Course), certification course. She explained that this was a two-day instructor development course scheduled for July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and would certify Mr. Durkee to return to Warren County with training information and materials to train select employees from various Departments to become driver safety trainers themselves. Ms. Auer said that the various Departments would then offer in-service training to those employees within the Department that drove County vehicles.

Ms. Auer apprised that this plan of action had been discussed at the most recent Safety Committee Meeting, and approved at the April 30<sup>th</sup> Insurance Committee meeting, providing that the Safety Committee Budget would cover all costs for attendance and certification. She noted that the cost for the course was \$365.00 plus the hotel cost, which Amy Clute, Self Insurance Administrator, had researched and estimated as \$140.00 for two nights, plus meals and fuel costs.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to approve out-of state travel for Daniel Durkee to attend the National Safety Council's DDIC certification course as outlined above with all costs to be funded by the Safety Committee Budget and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Auer stated that the agenda also included a request for Committee approval for Ms. Schaldone to travel to the 2007 Home Care Association Annual Home Care Meeting and Exhibition to be held in Saratoga Springs, NY on June 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>. She said that although attendance at this meeting was costly, the information received from it was very valuable.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the request for Ms. Schaldone to travel to the 2007 Home Care Association Annual Home Care Meeting and Exhibition as referenced above. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Regarding the County Travel Policy, Ms. Auer stated that she had been advised by Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, that prior Committee approval was not required for travel deemed necessary to perform the normal course of business, as well as for local no cost

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conferences. Mr. Haskell agreed and noted the same allowances had been made for DPW staff, as this travel was part of their job.

The final resolution request, Ms. Auer apprised, was a request to amend to amend Resolution No. 726 of 2004, which authorized continuing contractual relationships with various contractors and agencies, to reflect the changes in rates for therapy services and related duties that had already been approved and instituted as of March 1, 2007. She noted that this amendment was requested by the County Attorney's Office to assure that all language pertinent to reimbursement for services was standardized and correct in relation to the payment for services rendered in the two distinct regions of the County.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend Resolution No. 726 of 2004 as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Referring to the document entitled 'Rabies Program', included in the agenda, Mr. Champagne asked for clarification on the number of animals listed for the Town of Queensbury. Ginelle Jones, Assistant Director of Public Health Services, replied that in cases of animal bites, part of the follow-up procedure was to verify the vaccination of the animal and the chart shown in this document reflected the results of that procedure. She apprised that upon the occurrence of a dog bite, for instance, research was performed to determine if the animal was vaccinated and if not, it was required that the animal be quarantined for ten days to determine if it was rabid.

Discussion ensued.

With respect to the periodic rabies clinics sponsored by the Public Health Department, Mr. Mason asked who performed the actual rabies vaccinations and Ms. Jones replied that the Public Health Department contracted with the Glens Falls Animal Hospital to purchase the vaccine and administer the vaccinations, the costs of which was considerable. Luckily, Ms. Auer apprised, reimbursement from the State was available for these costs.

Mr. Haskell stated that he had experienced these rabies clinics first hand in the Town of Thurman, and he said that he was shocked by the number of people who visited them.

Mr. Mason asked if a fee was charged at these clinics and Ms. Auer replied that there was no fee; however, there was a suggested donation.

Ms. Auer directed the Committee to the Revenues and Expenditures spreadsheet, which was included in the agenda, and she noted that Tawn Driscoll, Provisional Financial Manager, was in attendance to answer any questions they might have with respect to this document.

Mr. Haskell asked if the anticipated revenues for 2006 had been met and Ms. Driscoll replied that she was unsure, as the Treasurer's Office had not delivered the final figures for 2006 as of yet. Ms. Auer noted that the State aid claims and program funding dollars were sent directly to the

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Treasurer's Office, and invariably were late, so they were not sure what the true totals would be until the Treasurer had completed the 2006 financial statements for the Public Health Department.

Mr. Mason asked if the Public Health Department was financially sufficient such that it actually realized a profit and Ms. Auer replied in the negative. She explained that because the Early Intervention and Pre-School programs were mandated by the State of New York, the Public Health Department was responsible for funding them. Ms. Auer said that while the CHHA portion of the Public Health Department did make a profit, many of the other Public Health programs did not. Mr. Haskell asked if the Department, as a whole, made a profit and Ms. Auer replied that it did not, because of the costs of mandated programs. Mr. Mason asked if the revenues received through the CHHA program remained with the Public Health Department and Ms. Auer responded in the negative.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Haskell asked what the approximate time line was between the receipt of State funding and notification to the Public Health Department by the Treasurer's Office and Ms. Driscoll replied that their Department was not notified of the receipt of funds. She explained that periodically she reviewed the Department's revenue codes to determine if funding had been received. Ms. Driscoll noted that in March of 2007 they had finally received State funding owed from the first and second quarters of 2006. Mr. Haskell said he was astounded by the delay in payments from the State and he suggested that they consider contacting Senator Little with respect to this matter and to request that some changes be made to ensure State aid was received in a more timely manner. Ms. Schaldone stated that the delayed receipt of State revenues caused a problem because expenses, such as salaries, still had to be paid regardless of whether or not the revenues were received on time. Mr. Champagne asked how they were able to do this and Mr. Haskell replied that monies were being removed from the surplus fund with the intention of replacing them when the revenues were received; however, in some cases those revenues were never realized and that was why the surplus fund was quickly being depleted. Adding to this dilemma, Ms. Auer stated, programs such as the preschool program utilized a State education rate setting methodology which allowed programs to submit costs at the end of the year and items such as contract raises would not trickle down to the County level for years leading to mass reconciliations which the Public Health Department had no way of predicting.

Mr. Mason asked what account State Aid revenues were posted to upon receipt by the Treasurer's Office and Ms. Driscoll replied that they were coded to the Public Health's revenue account. Mr. Mason then asked if the Health Department had increased mandated programs and Ms. Auer replied that they had slightly; however, the intensity of services required had grown. For instance, she explained, a child whom may have received only speech therapy in the past was now receiving three or four other specialized services on top of the speech therapy which translated to an increase in costs. In addition, she noted, a number of the children receiving these early intervention services were not medicaid eligible.

Discussion ensued.

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, asked if the \$25,000 grant funding from the New York State Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program had been received and Ms. Auer replied that it had not. She explained that they had submitted the work plan for the funding and they would request the funds by voucher on a quarterly basis.

As there was no further business to come before the Health Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Mason adjourned the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist