

Public Health Committee Minutes
July 2, 2008 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Lucia; Supervisors Connelly, Southworth, Wood and Wright; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Janet Glenn, Terry Stortz, Alan Kempf, Public Health; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Dale Angstadt, Mental Health; Wilma Koss, Saratoga Springs Resident; Press.

Chairman Lucia called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Wright the minutes of the June 4, 2008 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. Brown said in 2003 Maplewood Manor entered into an agreement which allowed residents with Tri-Care Insurance to come to the nursing home. A new agreement has been requested. The reimbursement is the same as Medicare. Tri-Care will become the primary payer if the beneficiary does not have any other health insurance.

A motion was made by Mrs. Southworth, seconded by Mr. Wright to accept a new agreement contract with Tri-Care Insurance. Unanimous.
(Committee Approval Only)

Mrs. Brown in 2004 Maplewood Manor entered into an agreement with Beacon Network Services. Recently notification was received that any agreements that were issued by Beacon Network Services will be replaced with Univera Insurance. In the new agreement there will be increases in the rates as follows:

Skilled Nursing	\$195 - \$200
Sub-acute Therapy	\$255 - \$275
Sub-acute Rehab	\$320 - \$350

The skilled nursing service rate is lower than the current private pay rate of \$235, but there are a very limited number of residents that would be in this category, she said. Most residents will be in the sub-acute therapy category. The new agreement would also reimburse for therapy services rendered after the resident's in-patient skilled services or custodial levels. This would be for people who have been here for a while and need therapy, but don't qualify for the daily reimbursement.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Wright to approve the above proposed increases for services in the Univera Insurance Contract. Unanimous.

Mrs. Brown said there are several residents at Maplewood Manor who are 100 years of age, with the oldest resident turning 106 on August 2, 2008. Forty seven percent of the residents at Maplewood Manor are between 80 and 89; twenty eight percent of the residents are between 90 and 99.

Mrs. Glenn requested a resolution to increase agency charges, effective 8/1/08.

Periodically the agency rates are reviewed to determine if there is a need to raise them. The following are some important reasons for doing so:

1. To establish charges high enough to maximize Medicaid revenues, while remaining competitive with similar agencies serving County residents.
2. Increasing the charges allows for more leverage to negotiate more Favorable rates from private insurance companies.

A survey was done with the other certified agencies that cover Saratoga County and it was determined that an increase in the rates was needed for Nursing & PRI services; Therapy services; Medical Social Service and Nutrition services. Each service is to be increased by \$10. The Home Health Aid hourly charge will remain the same at \$50/hr. The following changes have been proposed:

Nursing	\$160	\$170
Nursing (PRI)	\$160	\$170
Physical Therapy	\$105	\$115
Occupational Therapy	\$105	\$115
Speech Therapy	\$110	\$115
Medical Social Work	\$105	\$115
Nutrition	\$105	\$115
Home Health Aide(hour)	\$ 50	\$ 50 (no change)

The last rate increase took place in 2007.

There is a sliding scale for those individuals who have difficulty paying for the PRI, as well as any services that the Certified Home Health Agency provides.

Mrs. Glenn said the therapy rates remain the lowest of all the agencies serving county residents. The therapy program, through increased visits, has provided a strong program, helping to keep charges lower than other agencies serving the county.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mrs. Southworth to approve a resolution to increase agency fees as listed above, effective 8/1/08. Unanimous.

Mrs. Glenn requested amending Resolution #21 of 2006 to increase the fee schedule for inoculation clinics for flu/pneumococcal vaccine, effective 8/1/08 as follows:

	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Influenza (Flu)	\$12.00	\$15.00
Pneumococcal	\$25.00	\$30.00

For the 2006-2007 & 2007-2008 seasons, the charge for administration of flu shots was \$12.00. During the 2007-2008 season approximately 2,875 shots were administered, of those, 23-25% were self-pay. The remainder was paid by insurance.

At the flu clinics, attendees are encouraged to bring their insurance information. Public Health bills several different insurance companies, otherwise the patient is charged. However, if a patient is unable to pay they will not be turned away.

If an insurance plan is billed and notification is sent that it isn't covered, and is applied to a deductible or subject to co-pay, the patient is sent a bill in the mail.

The cost for Pneumococcal vaccine has also risen, therefore, a request has been made to increase the charges for pneumococcal and influenza vaccine to support the costs of administering the vaccine.

Mrs. Glenn said most of the neighboring counties charge anywhere from \$20 to \$25 for the flu vaccine and \$35 - \$45 for the pneumococcal vaccine.

A motion was made by Mr. Connelly, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the increase in the flu and pneumococcal vaccines as stated above. Unanimous.

Mrs. Glenn requested a resolution to contract with the Zoonoses program for the period of 1/1/02008 – 3/31/2012.

As discussed at the June Public Health meeting, funding from the State for various programs is becoming more structured with each participating county having individual contracts.

The Zoonoses program focuses on diseases, which are communicable from animals to humans under natural conditions. The principal focus of this program is Rabies. In 1993 Saratoga County was deemed a “Rabies County” by the Department of Health as the first confirmed rabid animal in the county was confirmed. The county health department is responsible to develop a rabies control protocol that identifies and coordinates all activities within the county to accomplish a comprehensive rabies approach. The county has had such a plan in place for several years, and amends it as regulations change.

Along with that also goes the Counties responsibility for the services and expenses necessary for the suppression of the human rabies. This means that anyone approved for treatment, or their guarantors, shall have no out of pocket costs.

As such, the County has had to assume fiduciary responsibility for the following:

- The patient’s balance after all insurance plans make their payments, if it was an approved case.
- All costs for a patient without insurance.

Previously, through a Memorandum of Understanding, the State has reimbursed the County up to \$1,000 per case of human rabies post-exposure treatment; \$5,000 per year to offset the costs of holding pet vaccination clinics and costs associated with the preparation and shipment of specimens to the State lab for testing.

This has now been formalized into a contract process that will span four years and three months, retroactive to 1/1/08 and run through 3/31/2012. For the initial fifteen month period available funding will be up to \$60,085, and up to \$39,608 for each of the subsequent four years. These figures are likely to change because with the new State budget, we are facing a 2% reduction in all of the grant programs. The figures will likely decrease to a maximum of \$58,833 for the initial period, and up to \$38,816 for each of the remaining four years.

A motion was made by Mrs. Southworth, seconded by Mr. Connelly to approve a resolution to contract with the Zoonoses Program for the period of 1/1/2008 – 3/31/2012. Unanimous.

Mrs. Glenn requested a resolution to amend the Public Health Policy and Procedure manual.

She said a resolution is required annually per the requirements of the rules and regulations for the certified home health agencies, Title 10, Chapter V, 753.11, which states that the governing authority shall adopt and amend the policies regarding management and operation of the agency and the provision of patient care services.

From July 2007 through July 2008, there was one new policy/procedure. This is a result of a new law that went into effect 11/1/07, having to do with the court ordered HIV testing. In November of 2007, New York Criminal Law 210.16 allowed for the testing of defendants indicted for certain sex offenses for the human immunodeficiency virus or HIV, upon the request of the survivor. The law requires that the state, county or local public health officer conduct the testing. Once a defendant has been indicted; the survivor has six months to request the defendant be tested for HIV. The DA's office will then obtain a court order for the test to be performed and will notify the Public Health office and provide the needed information. Arrangements are then made to pre counsel and test both the survivor and defendant within 48 hours of the court order. Once all testing is completed, the court is notified that testing has been completed, but is not allowed to get the test results.

This policy was established while working closely with the District Attorney's office, she said.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve a resolution amending the Public Health Policy and Procedure Manual. Unanimous.

Mrs. Glenn requested committee approval of the reimbursement rates from Excellus BC/BS, effective August 1, 2008.

Mrs. Glenn said Public Health continues to negotiate with insurance plans regarding rates as participating providers. While some of the contracts have been in place for years, others are new.

The requested rate increases from Excellus BC/BS are as follows:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>As proposed</u>
Skilled Nursing	\$118/visit	\$165/visit
Physical Therapy	\$100/visit	\$105/visit
Occupational Therapy	\$100/visit	\$105/visit
Speech Therapy	\$100/visit	\$105/visit
Medical Social Worker	\$75/visit	up to: \$165/visit
Home Health Aide	\$32/visit	up to: \$ 60/hour

A motion was made by Mrs. Southworth, seconded by Mr. Connelly to approve the above stated reimbursement rates from Excellus BC/BS. Unanimous. (Committee Approval Only)

Mr. Lucia asked if there were many reports of Ticks this year. Mrs. Stortz said Public Health is receiving approximately 10 – 15 reports for positive Lyme Disease diagnosed in the county daily.

Mrs. Brown said the Fun Day that was held at Maplewood Manor on June 18th raised over \$2,000. This money will be used throughout the year to support activities for the residents.

On a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Wood the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom