

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MINUTES

MAY 7, 2008 – 3:30 P.M.

Present: Chairman Lucia; Supervisors Connelly, Sausville, Southworth, Wood, Wright, Yepsen; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Janet Glenn, Public Health; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Hans Lehr, Mental Health; 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 April 2, 2008 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. Brown said National Nursing Home Week begins on May 11th and runs through May 17, 2008. Each year the Board of Supervisors provides a resolution proclaiming as National Nursing Home Week and identifies the four nursing homes that are in Saratoga County.

Mrs. Brown said she and Mrs. Glenn are on a committee that is a consortium of healthcare providers for Saratoga County, including Saratoga Hospital, the hospital nursing home, three nursing homes in the County, Public Health, other home care agencies and Hospice. The committee has been meeting since December of 2006 and is entitled "Partners for Prevention". Back in November of 2006 the Department of Health sent out an administrators letter, declaring what they called a "War on the Sore" to establish and improve pressure ulcer prevention. The goal is to improve pressure ulcer prevention and treatment in nursing homes, and improve communication between the providers, coordinate paperwork and educate the staff with the terminology. Recently, the committee was notified of a grant opportunity, although each nursing home could participate separately, no one has the time to apply alone and the chances of being awarded the grant are enhanced if a consortium or group applies it for. The grant would be used to develop a web based educational program for care providers, with three levels of programs. The certified nurse assistants, home health aides, personal care aides would be on one level; the second level would be LPN's, diet technicians; the third level would be the registered nurses, physical therapists, and Doctors. The program would be coordinated through Excelsior College. The grant is for 18 months with the goal to train all the personnel during that period. Wesley Healthcare Center has volunteered to be the signer of the grant and to be the project coordinator.

Mrs. Brown requested committee approval for the grant. The grant total would be \$45,000 for the group.

A motion was made by Mrs. Yepsen, seconded by Mrs. Southworth to approve a Partners in Prevention Grant in the amount of \$45,000. Unanimous.

Mr. Lehr distributed copies of the 2007 Annual Report from the Saratoga County Mental Health Center. He said the mission of the Mental Health Center is to provide outpatient mental health and alcohol/drug treatment services that are accessible and responsive to the needs of persons suffering from mental illness or alcohol/drug problems, their families and the community. The Mental Health Center is comprised of three programs: Mental Health Clinic; Continuing Day Treatment Program; and Alcohol and Drug Program. The major issue confronting the Clinic in 2007 was dealing with the loss of psychiatric patient contact time. Two psychiatrists who accounted for approximately 1 Full Time Equivalency were lost. Saratoga Hospital remained unsuccessful in recruiting a psychiatrist for the clinic. As a result, the clinic lost a little more than 53 hours of psychiatrist time in 2007. In addition, center psychiatrists continued to provide services to other departments, particularly the Saratoga County Correctional Facility and Maplewood Manor. This resulted in a decrease of 1,457 patient contacts in 2007 by psychiatrists. Demand of services remains high, he said.

The status of the 2007 goals for the center are as follows:

1. The issue of relocation remains a primary issue. In the summer of 2006, Saratoga Hospital gave notice to terminate the clinic lease, effective July 2007. The hospital, in response to efforts made by medical staff, bolstered by strong vocal community support for the center, reinstated the lease. This remains a short-term resolution, given the hospital's long-term plans for the building footprint.
2. The continued effort to recruit a psychiatrist was unsuccessful. Salary and vacation were the primary obstacles to successful recruitment. The issue of salary and benefits was presented to the County Administration and the Board of Supervisors. A newly formed Personnel Committee is assigned responsibility for addressing this issue in 2008.
3. The role of the Center was been clarified with County Emergency Services in the County Emergency Preparedness Plan.
4. The Board of Supervisors approved an upgrade to the management information system so that the center could address the changing requirements from both the federal and state level regarding billing, coding and data sharing.
5. Youth Services received a Child and Family Clinic Plus designation from OMH and a staff member was hired. Systems were established. First referrals are anticipated in early 2008. The purpose of this initiative is to identify children in the community who need treatment, but normally do not access treatment.

The following are goals set for 2008:

1. Continue to address the issue of relocating the Center. The Clinic lease with Saratoga Hospital ends December 2009.

2. Provide needed psychiatric coverage for patients and other departments. Continue to recruit for now two psychiatrists. Contract with a locum tenens company to provide short-term psychiatric coverage.
3. Install the MIS upgrade, complete the conversion, and become operational with Medicare and Medicaid billing.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom