

Public Health Committee Minutes

December 13, 2010 – 2:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Rowland; Supervisors Collyer, Lucia, Southworth, Wormuth, Yepsen, Wood and Thompson; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Alan Kempf, Janet Glenn, Public Health; Dale Angstadt, Mental Health, Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Lucia the minutes of the November 18, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. Brown said Public Health currently has a physical therapy contract with Thomas Nicolla Consulting Services, PLLC, for a full time physical therapist. When Mr. Thomas Nicolla is not at the facility, someone else is sent in his place, as there is a need for someone on site to do restorative physical therapy.

In January of 2009 there was an increase in the hourly rate for the physical therapist at \$46.48/hr. Since then they have remained at \$46.48/hr. and they have also agreed to maintain that same rate for 2011.

Mrs. Brown requested a resolution to agree to extend the current physical therapist contract for another year at a rate of \$46.48/hr.

A motion was made by Mrs. Southworth, seconded by Ms. Yepsen to approve the renewal of the physical therapy contract with Thomas Nicolla Consulting Services, PLLC at a rate of \$46.48/hr. for 2011. Unanimous.

Mrs. Southworth said there has been good feedback from the people who have been receiving the care. It is great that they are holding their price the same. We are getting a good service for it.

Mrs. Brown said in October of 2010 the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services changed the methodology for Medicaid/Medicare reimbursement with the implementation of the MDS 3.0 and RUGS IV Systems of reimbursement. Harmony Healthcare International consulting group has a proven track record for increasing revenue and ensuring compliance with the new mandates. Services include Medicare Part A off site chart audits, mock surveys and program development. They assist the medical staff with identification of MDS items as they relate to care and reimbursement, along with ADL coding, coring changes, submission requirements, and case management strategies.

Mrs. Brown said they would come in two times beginning January 2011, and then once per month thereafter; looking at Medicare chart audits for accuracy, patients specific case management strategies, associated dollar impact, monthly Medicaid revenue analysis, monthly length of stay analysis, therapy program analysis and consultation. There is access in between their visits to on site use of the Medicare manuals and informational and educational in services on a number of different aspects of Medicare and reimbursement. The cost of the service is \$2,800/day for a total of 13 days a year with a total yearly expense of \$36,400.

Historical data was submitted to Harmony Healthcare International, Inc. prior to considering them and submitting them for the 2011 budget. They showed a huge potential for increased revenue. The expense for the service is in the 2011 budget with an additional revenue offset, which is actually much higher than what the expenses would have cost. After speaking with three other nursing homes that are using Harmony Healthcare International, Inc., all of them saw a substantial increase in their revenue that they directly attributed to using them. Just knowing some of the rules that are not common rules, and very difficult to find, they are really able to maximize the reimbursement, she said.

Mrs. Brown requested a resolution to enter into a contract with Harmony Healthcare International, Inc. that would allow them to look at services and make sure that Maplewood Manor is in compliance and taking credit for everything they do.

Mr. Rowland asked if there were other vendors that provide this service? Mrs. Brown said there are a couple other companies that do some things, however, Harmony Healthcare International, Inc. is managed by highly qualified therapists.

Mrs. Wormuth asked how we ended up with Harmony Healthcare International, Inc.? Mrs. Brown said she went to a couple of seminars and they were there as vendors. One of their current people, we had actually worked with in the past. Conversations took place with other nursing homes that are using Harmony Healthcare International, Inc.

A motion was made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mr. Lucia to approve a resolution to enter into a contract with Harmony Healthcare International, Inc. for one year at a cost of \$36,400. Unanimous.

Mrs. Brown said Maplewood Manor has had a contract with CDPHP since 2007, providing services to their members. An amendment to the agreement was received, which is necessary to reflect changes in the state code. Instead of a 45-day turnaround they will be paying within 30 days.

Mrs. Brown said the state requires that 120 days from when a service is provided we would have to bill out. CDPHP actually has allowed us 180 days, and they are going to continue with that; however, the contract will need to say 120 days.

A motion was made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mrs. Southworth to approve a resolution to approve CDPHP and unified contract amendments. Unanimous (Committee Approval Only)

Mrs. Glenn said in 2009, Public Health was advised by the NYS Department of Health of available ARRA funding for the Early Intervention Program. Recently the work plan was approved to use those funds. The award amount is up to \$78,164, and will have to be used by 9/30/11.

The funding will be used to update technology (Laptop, printers, software) and to provide storage solutions (5-drawer Lateral file) and train the providers of care, both employed and contracted, on the use of the new internet based system for the program recently implemented by the state.

For the contract, it will be necessary to contract with an outside trainer at an estimated cost of \$15,195. As this is over the minor contract limit of \$10,000, the resolution will request the ability to sub contract as needed.

Payroll expenses are estimated to be \$36,284, and are already included in the County Budget.

Public Health hopes to make all technology and equipment purchases in 2010. The remainder of the ongoing expenses will be expended from the 2011 budget.

Mrs. Glen requested a resolution to enter into an agreement with the NYS Department of Health to accept ARRA funding for the Early Intervention Program and to amend the 2010 county budget.

A motion was made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mrs. Southworth to approve a resolution to enter into an agreement with the NYS Department of Health to accept ARRA funding for the Early Intervention Program in the amount of \$78,164, and to amend the 2010 county budget. Unanimous.

Mrs. Glenn said, recently she was approached by CDPHP to amend the current contract to participate in their readmission avoidance program. The purpose of the program is to reduce inpatient re-admission for certain diagnoses such as Congestive Heart Failure for their members. It will involve patients discharged from Saratoga Hospital, and calls for one staff nurse, referred to as a "coach". This individual will visit the patient within 24-48 hours of discharge to provide a comprehensive assessment focusing on medication, reconciliation, environmental assessment, and disease processes. The nurse will also assist in securing a visit for the patient with their primary care physician within 7 days. The reimbursement will be \$125 a visit. In addition, there will be a reimbursement of \$25 each for follow-up phone calls to the patient each week for 3 to 4 weeks after the initial visit. CDPHP has been doing this program successfully with several Albany area hospitals and now wants to expand it to Saratoga Hospital.

Mrs. Glenn requested a committee resolution to amend the CDPHP contract.

A motion was made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mrs. Southworth to approve a CDPHP contract amendment as outlined above. Unanimous. (Committee Approval Only)

Mrs. Glenn thanked Chairman Rowland and the members of the Public Health Committee for their support and guidance during the past year. This year has been filled with challenges, which have been overcome, and opportunities that have been made possible through the efforts of this committee, she said.

Mr. Rowland said, as a member of the Buildings and Grounds subcommittee, an investigation of a couple of facilities to replace Friendship House took place. A building will be recommended at the Building and Grounds committee that will save the county money, providing a 3,000-sq. ft. facility with open space for group meetings and office space. The location of the building is on Geyser Road in the Town of Milton.

Mr. Rowland said the lease would be for five years, with \$11/sq. ft. for the first three years and \$12/sq. ft. for the next two years, saving the county approximately \$20,000/yr.

Mrs. Wormuth said, this is a great cooperation between the committees that we were able to move this forward so quickly.

On a motion made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mrs. Southworth the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom