

## Social Programs Committee Minutes

February 1, 2011 – 2:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Lucia; Supervisors Collyer, Richardson, Rowland, Sausville, and Wood; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Sandy Cross, Office for the Aging; Robert Christopher, Pat Maxwell, Social Services; Press.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Rowland the minutes of the December 14, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.**

Chairman Lucia announced the appointment of Mr. Grattidge as Vice Chairman of the Social Programs Committee.

Mrs. Cross requested a resolution for the renewal of EISEP contracts. These are the agencies that are contracted to provide home care for seniors in their homes, providing housekeeping and personal care. The rates are set by NYS Medicaid and remain the same as last year.

Mr. Collyer asked if the Office for the Aging kept a portion of the fee? Mrs. Cross said this is a per hour rate that is paid to the Home Care Agency.

**A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Rowland to approve a resolution to renew EISEP Contracts with ten different Home Care Agencies at the same hourly rate as 2010. Unanimous.**

Mr. Sausville asked if all the Home Care Service providers offer the same service? Mrs. Cross said, yes. Mr. Sausville asked why the rates per hour varied? Mrs. Cross said the rates vary because NYS uses a formula that is set by Medicaid and is published once a year. Mr. Sausville asked what determines which agency will be called? Mrs. Cross said it is usually based on who has someone available. The case managers in certain parts of the county know what agencies will service what areas.

Mr. Christopher said back in November the Department of Social Services was audited with respect to the Protective Services for Adults Service (PSA). They were looking at whether they were in compliance with provisions of part 457 of the Department of Regulations. There was a caseload of 74 open cases at the time of the audit, he said. The people who are served are the most vulnerable people in the county. People who are at risk of hurting themselves through neglect or being abused by others because of their own incompetence. The service has been very effective in preventing people from entering a nursing home or being institutionalized, he said. We are successful almost

every time the agency gets involved, and services are provided. In some severe cases the case will end up in court when the individual is thought to be incompetent, and in those situations a Guardianship can come into play. A Guardianship is something that is covered under article 81 of the Mental Health Law. The county has been very successful in avoiding guardianships, where Mr. Christopher would become the guardian for the individual. This is the least desirable outcome because the least restrictive methods are to be used to address the problems, he said. The staff has been very good in finding alternative ways to address the problem without having Social Services take over the case. Usually other resources are found such as a family member acting as guardian for the person. Mr. Christopher said due to the diligent casework of the PSA staff, there is only one person in Saratoga County that he is guardian for right now.

Mr. Christopher read the following information that was presented in a recent audit.

Home Visits and Progress notes: All of the regular monthly home visits and other required client contacts due for the sample referrals were appropriately made or attempted. These contacts, plus the collateral contacts noted in the case records clearly showed that good efforts were made to both protect vulnerable adults, and help clients obtain entitlement to improve the quality of life. The over 400 progress notes for these cases were recorded in a timely fashion 100% of the time. The case files showed that referral sources and clients were being appropriately notified about the eligibility decisions in the cases. As required, signed applications for services were found in all of the cases open for services. The 100% scores, and the timely completion of referral stages, home visits, and project notes in the eligibility notification sources of clients, and completion of applications for cases only for services, reflects a level of diligence in processing cases that is outstanding. The PSA unit is to be commended for this accomplishment and is encouraged to continue its exemplary practices in these areas.

Caseworker: The assessments and services reviewed for these cases were in each instance appropriately completed. The risks identified for clients were addressed with relevant referrals to community agencies and with available DSS services. Assistance in applying for a wide range of entitlements including Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance, Medical Insurance, HEAP, Transportation, Housing and Homemaker and Home Care Services, as well as, referrals to the Office for the Aging programs, Mental Health Services, Day Programming and Visiting Nurses were frequently documented in the referrals and service plans were reviewed. In several instances, PSA caseworkers assisted clients and homemakers in cleaning client's apartments.

Pay E Cases: The documentation representing Pay E Cases showed that in each instance, the caseworkers were taking effective steps to provide critical financial management services to the client, including educating the client on the nature of and need for this service, and the caseworkers roll in providing it.

Guardianship: A review of the Guardianship case in the sample showed that the case worker was diligent in monitoring the welfare of the client, making telephone contacts and quarterly visits to the nursing home where the client resided. The documentation of

the comprehensive care plan and physicians orders were continually updated. The appropriate fields in the guardianship section of this automated system had been filled out, including the designated date, duration of guardianship and court time, all in compliance with the law.

Conclusion: The professionalism, hard work and compassion of Saratoga County PSA staff is evident throughout their referrals, progress notes and service plans on the sample cases. The PSA eligibility determinations were sound in the cases reviewed, and overall the quality of casework provided was very high. In some instances the actions of case workers prevented or addressed evictions, avoided utility shutoffs and in many other ways contributed to an improved quality of life for clients, while helping to maintain them in the community.

Mr. Christopher thanked Mr. Maxwell, Director of Services, that under his leadership that these kinds of good things can happen.

**On a motion made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Collyer the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Sansom