

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MINUTES

APRIL 5, 2006 – 3:30 P.M.

Present: Vice Chairman Raymond; Supervisors Callanan, Connors, Lucia, Richardson, and Yepsen; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Dale Angstadt, Mental Health; Helen Endres, Public Health; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Alan Kempf, Terry Stortz, Public Health; Press.

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

Ms. Endres distributed a copy of the 2005 Agency Evaluation and Annual Report from the Saratoga County Public Health Department to all committee members.

Ms. Endres said they have had bioterrorism preparedness activities going on throughout the year, involving extensive planning and drills to test the plan. There have been increases in working with community partners and the Saratoga County Emergency Preparedness Committee. Activities were focused on recruitment of volunteers, both lay personnel and MRC (Medical Reserve Corp). At the last meeting of the Medical Reserve Corp. there were 27 volunteer nurses who attended. Meetings will be held on a regular basis, encouraging more nurses to sign up. Work has begun with Cornell Cooperative Extension to support a Community Animal Response Team (CART) in cases of emergency or disaster where there is need to have individuals leave their homes.

Rabies continues with a number of rabid animals last year, the number remained fairly consistent with the prior years with 14 animals that were positive for rabies in 2005. The number of animal bites has increased significantly, from 494 in 2004 to 624 in 2005, resulting in a 26% increase. All animal bites are reported to the Public Health office, and they are followed up to ensure that the animals are up to date on their rabies immunizations, she said.

The Lyme Disease cases have increased from 45 identified cases in 2004 to 78 cases in 2005, representing a 73% increase.

Pertussis cases saw a decrease from 85 in 2004 to 17 in 2005. This disease seems to be very cyclical in nature, and the coverage provided by the vaccine given to children decreases over time. A new booster vaccine for adolescents/adults has been developed to boost the waning immunity and to help minimize future cases, she said.

The travel clinic program has become a very active program with attendance continuing to increase. There were a total of 441 visits by individuals in 2004 and 557 visits in 2005, representing a 26% increase. This program is very valuable for residents because they can obtain immunizations that may be needed should they go out of the country.

The Early Intervention Program has seen a steady increase in referrals. While enrollment seems to be finally leveling off slightly, the referrals have dramatically increased, resulting in considerable time spent to respond and evaluate each referral within the time constraints mandated. The public is encouraged to contact the Public Health Department

if they have concerns, and they are. Ms Endres said she didn't think it was a definite increase in children, but in awareness, with a good job being done on outreach. In 2004, there were 486 referrals and 573 in 2005, representing an increase of 18%. The total number of children enrolled in Early Intervention was 238 in 2004, and 262 in 2005.

There has been an increase of testing by providers for Lead Poisoning. In 2005 2,952 children were screened vs 2,515 in 2004, representing a 17% increase. Doctor's should be screening according to the New York State guidelines at age one and two. Public Health has been working very hard with pediatricians and family doctors to increase compliance of testing at both of those ages. We are seeing some improvements, she said.

The STD Clinic Program continues to see patients with a 16% increase in the program, with 273 in 2005 vs 235 in 2004.

CHHA (Certified Home Health Agency)

- Overall the Home Care revenues have increased.
- Physical Therapy services continue to increase. The provision of services was 5,613 visits in 2004, and 5,892 visits in 2005.
- The total agency visits decreased slightly from 31,065 to 28,105.
- Patient billings continue to be much more current than ever, due to the new 3M software system. We are able to bill in a much more timely manner and get the revenue in much sooner, which has made it much better in terms of claiming for services.
- Continuation of working with the Department of Social Services to perform assessments to evaluate their clients for a type of level of care. We also supervise the aides for those individuals in the Department of Social Services Personal Care Program.

The delivery of quality Public Health programs and services throughout our variety of programs are a major goal of the Public Health Department. As seen by this report, Public Health is very active in the community working to effectively protect the public's health. In 2006, Public Health will continue with the mission and look to enhance the networking and community alliances.

Mr. Connors stated, testing of a larger number of children for lead poisoning is good. Is there any feedback with regard to the number of positives, he asked.

Ms. Endres said thankfully, Public Health is not seeing a large number of the high levels of lead in children.

Ms. Raymond asked if there were any particular geographic areas that have seen levels of 10 or above. She expressed concern that in older neighborhoods with older homes, it might be more prevalent and more outreach may be needed.

Ms. Endres said information is mailed out to the parents where the lead levels come back at any level. Tracking is done as to where the children are that are coming back with positive lead.

On a motion made by Mr. Connors, seconded by Mr. Lucia the minutes of the February 1, 2006 minutes were approved unanimously.

Ms. Endres requested a resolution increasing the compensation for the Medical Social Worker effective 5/1/06. Currently, the rate is at \$50 per visit. Ms. Endres requested that the fee per visit be increased to \$58 per visit. Historically, if a patient was not home/not found, for example, had an emergency and was hospitalized, Public Health would pay \$50 for the social worker visit. Ms. Endres is requesting that the committee follow with what has been done with the PT's and OT's, and reduce it to \$12 per visit when the patient is not at home.

This rate has not been increased for ten years, she said. The number of visits that the MSW has made in the past several years is as follows: 258 – 2003; 259 – 2004; 2005 - 258. This service is required for the Long-Term Healthcare Program and Medicare conditions of participation. Insurance reimburses up to \$90 per visit. The Medicaid rate for the Long Term Healthcare Program for a Medical Social Worker visit is \$79.95. There are two medical social workers that contract with the Public Health Department. Counties north of Saratoga County are paying \$58 - \$60 per visit, she said.

A motion was made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution to approve an increase in the per visit rate for Medical Social Worker from the current \$50 per visit to \$58 per visit, \$12 for NH/NF visit, and continue attendance at required meeting at \$25 per meeting. Unanimous.

Mrs. Brown requested a resolution to increase the physical therapy contract by 3%. There is one physical therapist that comes to Maplewood Manor five days a week, four hours a day from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. If he is not available they send a replacement. The physical therapist needs to be in-house in order to be reimbursed from Medicare for therapy. The current rate is \$42.75/hr. and has been at this rate since 2004. The new rate would be retroactive from April 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007 at \$44.03/hr.

A motion was made by Mr. Connors, seconded by Mr. Callanan to approve a resolution increasing the hourly pay for the Physical Therapy Contract from the current \$42.75/hr to \$44.03/hr. Unanimous.

Mrs. Brown requested a resolution recognizing May 14-20 as National Nursing Home Week in Saratoga County.

A motion was made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Callanan to approve a resolution recognizing May 14-20 as National Nursing Home Week in Saratoga County. Unanimous.

Mrs. Brown said there are 16 employees that remain qualified for the Employee Meal Program. There are currently 8 people using the program, with 2 retiring next month, leaving 6 individuals using the program for the upcoming year. In order to be qualified

for the program an individual had to be employed from June 1, 1981. Last year there was an increase per meal from \$1.75 to \$2.00. Mrs. Brown is requesting that the meal price remain at \$2.00.

On a motion made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution to leave the Employee Meal Program at \$2.00 per meal. Unanimous.

Mrs. Brown distributed handouts with regard to the 2005 accomplishments at Maplewood Manor as follows:

Resident Program Changes:

- **Held a Resident, Family and Staff Talent Show**
- **Held a Resident Holiday Luncheon**
- **Revised Wandering and Elopement Program for Residents**
- **Joined IPRO (Pier Review Organization) 8Th Scope of Work With a Goal to Improve Resident and Staff Quality of Life**

This is a three-year project to come up with systems and ideas that would have a better quality of life for the residents. If in that, if your staff is happier, your residents are happier, she said.

- **Worked with Boy Scouts to Develop and Install Tactile Sensory Boards on Dementia Unit**

An Eagle Scout has developed and installed a two sensory boards in the dementia unit, giving residents something to do as they walk around.

Environment

- **Installed Stairwell Door Locks**

The stairwells in the past were always alarmed so that if someone were to open the door it would alarm. With the installation of the stairwell door locks, there is a code that will be needed in order to bypass the lock. If there was a fire, it is tied into the fire alarm system and it would automatically unlock all the doors. The charge nurse on the unit assigns staff to watch the stairwells, so residents don't leave via the stairwells during a fire alarm. If power were to go out, the system is on the emergency power system.

- **Began the implementation of the Nurse Call System**

Community

- **Raised \$1,000 to donate to the Katrina Relief Fund for Residents and Staff of Not-for-Profit Nursing Homes.**

The funds raised were sent to (AHSA) American Homes and Services for the Aging, with a match from another organization for a total donation of \$2,000. Funds were raised through a 50/50 raffle and bake sale.

- **Revamped the Comprehensive Emergency Management Program to include evacuation and change in bed capacity to accommodate external emergencies.**

Work continues with Public Health and other agencies conducting a disaster drill with a local fire department and EMS in the fall of 2005. Another drill will be conducted in the spring of 2006, with a goal of two drills a year.

Financial

- **Prepared for Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program**

On a Motion made by Mr. Connors, seconded by Mr. Lucia the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sansom