

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MINUTES

OCTOBER 3, 2006 – 4:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Daly; Supervisors Callanan, Raymond, Richardson, Thompson, and Gutheil; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Alan Kempf, Helen Endres, Terry Stortz Public Health; Hans Lehr, Dale Angstadt, Mental Health; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Hugh Burke, County Attorney; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the September 6, 2006 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Angstadt said the Mental Health Program consists of three basic parts including: Outpatient Mental Health Clinic, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Clinic and Friendship House, which is a continuing day treatment program for the more seriously mentally ill individuals who spend time in the day program, who come anywhere from one to five days a week. In addition to providing general clinic services on an outpatient basis, various services are provided to other departments.

The Mental Health Program provides ongoing Mental Health consultation services to the jail, the inmates in the jail and consultations and psychiatric services to the patients at Maplewood Manor. Various consultation services are provided to the Department of Social Services, both in the children's programs and to the adult protective services. Consultation services and ongoing evaluation services are provided to the family court. If needed evaluation and consultation services are provided to the personnel department on a request basis.

Mr. Angstadt said the demand for services in all three programs continues to slightly increase yearly. We have been reviewing our program and the screening process. We are in the process of reviewing our screening process and intake process for all the programs, primarily the outpatient clinic program. We reviewed and updated that process on intakes to give priority to the seriously and persistently mentally ill, which are our primary population of mental health clients in the outpatient clinic, and keeping them as the primary population in the clinic.

In the Alcohol and Substance Abuse program a new program was implemented in conjunction with the Probation Department referred to as the "Probation Alcoholism Treatment Program". This is a program that has been recognized statewide and is done with co-treatment where the probation officer is involved in the treatment planning and in providing treatment in a group setting with probationers where there alcohol or substance abuse is involved in their crime.

The following were goals for 2006:

1. The recruitment of a new center psychiatrist who will provide coverage at the Saratoga County Correctional Facility and at the Mental Health Center.

2. Successfully maneuver the transition to Medicare D for patients. Our population reflects a group of individuals at high risk both to themselves and the community, if any disruption in medication management occurs.
3. Continue to explore options to address the chronic space issues experienced at the Center. Problems with the physical facility Friendship House occupies have been noted, but not cited due to consequences to the program during the last two site inspections by NYS Office of Mental Health. The physical space at Saratoga Hospital that the Clinic occupies is inadequate, causing a number of operational problems that at times impacts upon patient care.

Ms. Daly said the accomplishments of the Mental Health Department are very impressive and the department really stands to be commended for the work they have done.

Mr. Angstadt said that he and Mr. Ritchey have looked at two places, thus far. One at the Industrial Park near Geyser Crest and one in Clifton Corporate Park on Rt. 146. Mrs. Johnson has had several phone calls and several other people that she has told to call the Mental Health Office with information; however, they have not done so to date, he said.

Mr. Angstadt said he is in the process of looking at floor plans for building and looking at exactly how many offices and what minimum size we will need.

Mrs. Raymond asked when Mental Health would have to be out of the current facility?

Mr. Angstadt said originally they were told July 31, 2007.

Ms. Daly said they have offered an extension if needed, perhaps up to six months.

Ms. Raymond said her concern is that she is not hearing a sense of emergency. "I am not going to be real happy to be sitting here next April or May when we have no where to go and we have to be out and what are we going to do", she said.

Ms. Daly said we do have some opportunities that are available to us. Of the two that have already been looked at, one is very different and probably one would be more clinic ready than the other one.

Ms. Daly said short-term solutions are being looked at. Something that would be available to move into and accommodate the immediate needs, something that would not require a long-term commitment and would work.

Ms. Raymond said she would hope that the committee could send a message back to the Buildings and Grounds committee to set a target date by which a contract would be signed, possibly by March 31, 2007.

Ms. Daly said she has been in discussion with Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Ritchey with regard to possible new locations for Mental Health.

Ms. Raymond said she would like to see more of a sense of urgency with regard to the relocation of the Mental Health facility.

Ms. Endres requested authorization from the committee to write-off bad debts in the amount of \$918.15.

Ms. Endres said she comes every October to present to the committee the bad debts that are requested for write-offs. This will go directly to the Law and Finance Committee and does not need a resolution.

Ms. Endres said there is a collection process in place as follows:

1. An invoice is sent in the month of service or when the Insurance advises us of the patient's responsibility. The next month a Statement is sent, if there is no payment from the two billings, the monthly collection process begins.
2. First notice
3. Final notice
4. If there is no payment, a letter from the Assistant County Attorney is then sent.
5. If there is still no payment, we then forward the bill to the Assistant County Attorney to determine if the County should move forward for litigation and collection.
6. In addition, calls are made to patients to see if help can be given, to try and get the accounts resolved.

Mr. Burke said historically the write-offs are between \$2,000 and \$3,000 yearly. The County Attorney's office pursues the largest resource recovery cases, budgeting time to chase the large amounts, he said.

A motion was made by Mr. Callanan, seconded by Ms. Raymond to approve the write-off of bad debts in the amount of \$918.15. Unanimous.

Mr. Callanan asked how many accounts are there in a year?

Mr. Kempf said there are approximately 400 to 500 cases yearly. Dollar wise it is less than ¼ of 1% of the non-Medicaid/Medicare home care revenues.

Ms. Endres requested a resolution to enter into an agreement with the New York State Department of Health accepting a Bio-Terrorism Preparedness Grant for the period of 8/31/06 – 8/30/07 in the amount of \$200,635.

This is the fifth round of grant funding from the New York State Department of Health, she said.

Ms. Endres gave a brief update on the activities for the past year as follows:

1. We have set up a Medical Reserve Corp and are in the process of recruiting volunteers. Last year a mailing was sent to nurses in the county. To date, there are approximately 68 medical volunteers and 120 non-medical volunteers.
2. In-services for both medical and non-medical volunteers have been provided, bringing them together in an effort to capture their interest.
3. Work continues with Cooperative Extension, local veterinarians, and the Emergency Services Department to develop a Community Animal Response Team to deal with animal issues should an emergency occur.
4. Work continues with the Assistant County Attorney, Sheriff's Department and Court System to review our current isolation and quarantine procedure to address mass isolation and quarantine. A tabletop drill was conducted at the hospital, attended by some of the county judges, Assistant County Attorney and representatives from the court system and others to go over the process if we did have to isolate and quarantine someone.
5. Meetings have been held with special population groups such as Skidmore College and local large businesses to enhance the ability to provide services during a pandemic or emergency event.
6. Meetings have been held with the Saratoga County Mental Health Department providing Public Health with two educational programs on Mental Health and Emergency preparedness for staff.
7. Meetings have been held with the Safety Committee at the Corinth School to review pandemic planning. Public Health is also available to meet with other schools as well, as they look at their own planning programs within the school system.
8. The staff has been fit-tested with the sizing of masks and protective personal equipment along with a core of nurses from Maplewood Manor. There are plans to do a core group from the Sheriff's Department and the City Police Department as well.
9. Most of the supervisory staff has been certified in NIMS (National Incident Management System). Most of the front-line staff have been certified in ICS (Incident Command System).

Mrs. Endres outlined the plans for this grant year as follows:

1. There are approximately 29 maintenance deliverables and 22 new deliverables to meet for the coming year.
2. There is more of a focus on further training of staff in upper level courses of the Incident Command system and the National Incident Management System.
3. There will be more fit testing for key response individuals

4. There will be more training and drills for mass distribution of medications or vaccine, refining processes and adding more criteria for evaluation.
5. There will be more work done to further refine disease surveillance.
6. There will be a large emphasis on education of the public and community partners, i.e., schools, businesses, municipal services, etc.
7. Work will be done on improving delivery of information systems, increasing the speed of evaluating, integrating and analyzing of health data.
8. There will be an increase in the knowledge of and efficiency of disease surveillance to facilitate early detection.
9. Communications
10. Responder for safety and health
11. Further work will be done on isolation and quarantine procedures because that is a developing plan in process, with continuing efforts to refine it, making sure it meets the need.
12. Further work will be done on mass prophylaxis and surge capacity.
13. A review of roles and responsibilities as it relates to sheltering of special populations.

Ms. Endres said this resolution would allow Public Health to accept grant funding and proceed with the plans for this year.

Ms. Endres said interviews are being conducted for a nurse for the liaison portion of the program.

Ms. Raymond asked, as you go further along in the process, where do the towns fit in?

Ms. Endres said, many of the towns have setup CERT teams including Clifton Park and Malta. If other towns would like to develop teams, Public Health would be more than happy to work with them, she said.

Ms. Raymond asked, if a procedure manual would be distributed to the towns?

Ms. Endres said Mr. Lent has put out some checklists for schools and businesses to follow in terms of emergency planning, as well as municipalities, water systems, National Grid.

Ms. Endres said there is an educator on staff that has gone to various towns to discuss planning and emergency preparedness. They are available for any towns that would like more information on planning.

A motion was made by Ms. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with the New York State Department of Health accepting a Bio-Terrorism Preparedness Grant for the period of 8/31/06 – 8/30/07 in the amount of \$200,635. Unanimous.

Ms. Endres said to date there are no indications of any vaccine shortages this year. We have set up tentative dates for 20 clinics throughout the county. They may have to be changed depending on the delivery of our vaccine.

To date, Public Health has only received 400 does of the original order of approximately 3,400 doses. Information regarding Public Health clinics will be publicized as soon as confirmation is received on the delivery date of the rest of the vaccine order, she said. Public Health is in regular contact with the drug company.

Information regarding the Saratoga County Public Health Clinic Schedule was distributed to all committee members.

Ms. Endres said the County Public Health Department will be charging \$12 per flu shot. If an individual is a Senior Citizen, Medicare will reimburse Public Health for the flu shot, so they will not have to pay.

Mrs. Brown said the new roof currently being put on the Maplewood Manor building should be complete in the next couple of weeks.

The work being done in the Maplewood Manor kitchen began today, she said.

On a motion made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Richardson the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom