

Public Health Committee Minutes
January 13, 2014 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Kinowski; Supervisors Allen, Collyer, Lent, Lunde, Ziegler, Martin, Veitch, and Sausville; Ryan Moore, Deputy Administrator; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Cathi Duncan, Michele Richardson, Public Health; Steve Dorsey, Hugh Burke, County Attorney; Hans Lehr, Mental Health; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Lunde the minutes of the December 9, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman Kinowski announced the appointment of Mr. Collyer as committee Vice Chair.

Mr. Lehr said Mental Health relocated to their new location in Saratoga Springs in October. He said the Community Services Board and Mental Health would like to have an Open House. Mr. Kinowski suggested that March would be a good month for the open house, the committee agreed. He encouraged all committee members to attend. Mr. Kinowski requested that Mr. Lehr, in the next month, choose a date and report back to the committee.

Mr. Lehr said Mental Health has had for years a sliding scale, but no self-pay policy. There are a good number of patients that are on a sliding scale basis and don't pay anything because they are Medicaid eligible. The program is geared to people with limited financial means, people without any kind of insurance who haven't accessed any other insurance and couldn't receive care otherwise. He said if the committee approves the self-pay policy there will be an expectation that everyone who comes for services, if they don't have other reimbursement, such as Medicare or Medicaid, they will be expected to pay a minimal amount of money. The expectation also is if they are Medicaid eligible that they receive Medicaid. Mr. Lehr said a letter was received from OASIS, the State licensing entity that approves this, that their continued presence and treatment will be impacted by whether or not they are willing to go along with the process. He said OASIS and OMH have verbally stated that they are okay with that.

Exceptions can be made by the Director, Administrator, and Assistant Director. These exceptions will typically be short-term and related to the acute mental status or active risk to self or others. Exceptions will be reviewed on a routine basis, as defined by procedure.

A handout describing the Self-pay policy was distributed to all committee members for their review.

Mr. Lent asked approximately how many patients would this policy currently affect. Mr. Lehr said approximately 10%.

A motion was made by Mr. Lunde, seconded by Mr. Ziegler to approve a Self-Pay Policy for the Mental Health Department as outlined. Unanimous.

Mr. Lehr requested acceptance of the final upgrade to allow Mental Health to be compliant with Federal Requirements. Regulations were passed a couple of years ago that all providers of medical services were mandated to bill under a new diagnosis code. He said currently Mental Health is under international classification 9, while most other entities have been on ICE 10 for many years. As of October 1, 2014 all bills must be submitted with ICE 10. The cost for the upgrade is \$12,000, with an annual fee of \$1,600. The completion of the upgrade will take approximately nine weeks, he said. Mr. Lehr said the contract would be with Netsmart Technologies, Inc.

A motion was made by Mr. Lunde, seconded by Mr. Ziegler to approve a contract with Netsmart Technologies, Inc. for an upgrade to the Mental Health billing system at a cost of \$12,000, plus an annual fee of \$1,600. Unanimous.

Mrs. Duncan distributed a handout outlining the Write off of uncollectibles in the amount of \$2,593.95.

Mrs. Duncan distributed a copy of the Saratoga County Public Health Nursing Service Bill and Collection Policy to all committee members for their review.

Mr. Kinowski said the policy does need to be updated. He requested that Mrs. Duncan review the policy and forward her recommendations to him.

Mr. Kinowski said after speaking to the County Attorney it was determined that it would be more cost effective to write off the bad debt in the amount of \$2,593.95 rather than try to collect it internally.

A motion was made by Mr. Ziegler, seconded by Mr. Lunde to approve writing off uncollectible bad debt in the amount of \$2,593.95. Unanimous.

Mr. Lunde said he has dealt with collections for a number of years. He asked if medical collections were more difficult to get payment on than bank collections. Mrs. Duncan said Public Health has been considering the use of credit cards. She said that she thinks that the PRI's can be resolved by requesting that the patient have the money with them to pay the nurse at the time of service.

Mr. Lunde said after reviewing the policy there was no reference to referring the collections to a collection agency. He said there is no cost to turn collections over to an agency. They work on a fee basis, i.e., if the collection is \$50, the collection agency would collect \$25 for their fee.

Mr. Dorsey said there would be no reason why you couldn't use a collection agency. Mr. Kinowski said turning it over to a collection agency is a welcomed idea that could be applied to the process at next month's meeting.

Mr. Martin cautioned the committee to take a close look at the policies and procedures of the collection agency.

Mr. Kinowski requested that Mr. Lunde look into the collection process for medical collections and report back to the committee.

Mrs. Duncan said the Billing Immunization and Implementation award was a grant collaborative that involves a number of counties. This was brought forward for them to work with a vendor, ACC Tech, for an electronic billing system. A request was made to accept a grant in the amount of \$24,950 and to amend the budget. The grant would be used for travel expenses, and office equipment.

A motion was made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Lunde to approve the acceptance of a Billing Immunization and Implementation grant for the Public Health Nursing Department in the amount of \$24,950. Unanimous.

Mrs. Duncan said there are a couple of COLA's through grants from the State of New York. The Rabies COLA is for \$3,284 for expenses from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. The Lead Poisoning Prevention COLA is for the time period of April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 in the amount of \$2,942 to be used for educational and outreach materials. The final COLA is for the Children with Special Needs Program for the time period of April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 in the amount of \$2,118.

A motion was made by Mr. Lent, seconded by Mr. Allen to approve COLA grants for Rabies (\$3,284); Lead (\$2,942); and Children with Special Healthcare Needs (\$2,118) to cover the time period of April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. Unanimous.

Mr. Kinowski said there are a number of things that need to be reaffirmed and stated from this committee as well as some potential changes that might be suggested. He said Maplewood Manor is open for business and is business as usual. With the sale of the building they will be looking for beds to be filled and to create business. Mr. Kinowski said the county has an internal policy on how beds are filled at Maplewood Manor, which begins with the Director and then is moved to a small internal committee made up of the Chairman of the Board, Chairman of Law and Finance, Chairman of the Public Health Committee, Finance Director, and the County Administrator. He said last year it was noted that in the time that it took to go through the process a patient was lost. Now that Maplewood is in the process of being sold the County will be conferring with the new owners to ask what their process would be and to adopt that as part of the consulting process. Mr. Kinowski proposed a change to the County's current policy whereby Mrs. Brown would collect all the information, and once it is collected she would

consult with the County Administrator or Mr. Kinowski where the decision would then be made.

A motion was made by Mr. Lent, seconded by Mr. Lunde to allow the Chairman to move forward with a change to the current policy for Maplewood Manor. Unanimous.

Mr. Kinowski asked by what means does a fire department or ambulance Corp. use to identify how they are going to find a house or place to respond. Mr. Lent said most departments just rely on intrinsic knowledge of the district in their area.

Mr. Kinowski said through some research it was noted that every individual has the right to go on a website and ask permission to change from the mapping, coming down to an individual responsibility if you do a 911 change. He said there are multiple engines that you can call such as Google Earth, Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.

On a motion made by Mr. Lent, seconded by Mr. Ziegler the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom