

HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

December 11, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tedra Cobb, Richard Edwards, Ruth Fishbeck, Brian Gardam, Dr. Edward Goldstein and Dr. Benjamin Gruda.

STAFF PRESENT: William Serafin, Laura Duval, Myrna Barney and Kindra Cousineau

Excused: Bruce Stone

Minutes of Previous Meeting (9/11/07): Ruth Fishbeck moved that the minutes be accepted as written. Dr. Goldstein seconded the motion. The motion carried.

UPDATES:

1. Jail Nursing Situation and Peoples Forum regarding this Problem:

Mr. Serafin reported that there are now 2 full time nurses on payroll working 16 hours shifts. He explained that the 16 hours shift is broken down into 12 hours of physical presence at the jail with an additional 4 hours of on-call duty. We also have two part-time nurses and two nurses on casual (per-diem) positions. We have a resolution before the County Services Committee to add an additional 2 nurses within the casual classification. This would create a bank of 4 persons to draw from when we need per-diem nurses to fill in. This does not create additional cost within the budget it is solely for backup purposes, for the unexpected. All jail nursing positions are now officially under the Public Health Budget. The full time and part-time employees receive benefits outlined in the CSEA contract.

Mr. Serafin reported that he is working with the labor management committee on wording regarding the casual nurses. The wording in the contract currently reads a casual employee is an employee who is engaged to work by the day. If the term of casual employment exceeds thirty days of work in a calendar year, it will be considered temporary or Regular part-time employment. The budget does not support having casual workers work over the 30 days where they would become part-time employees with benefits. Mr. Serafin noted that our Home Health Aides are considered regular part-time employees and receive pro-rated benefits. Mr. Serafin noted there is an advantage to having a job pool to call upon.

2. Status of Grant Applications:

Uninsured/Underinsured Grant: Mr. Serafin reported that a revised work plan has been submitted as requested and unofficially been advised that the grant application has been approved and we will be funded beginning 01/01/08. We can not make a public announcement until we receive official notification. Mr. Serafin noted that Ruth Fishbeck was the word smith on this application with the County Chamber and Public Health also working on the original application. Within the revisions the grant award will include an additional 15% for overhead costs.

Broadband Grant: Mr. Serafin reported that Ms. Cobb had brought this opportunity to his attention. He noted it was one of the easiest grants he has ever done. He simply phoned DANC and expressed an interest and wrote a letter of support. This is a grant for telemedicine that has been approved and SLC Public Health should be on board soon.

3. Pathologist Contract: Mr. Serafin explained that Jefferson County Pathologist currently assists St. Lawrence County on a part-time basis. We would like to get him anchored in this area with his credentials. If we can contract for these services through Jefferson County we will receive 58 autopsies annually. Having Dr. Livingston available eliminates several expenses such as transporting bodies and higher autopsy fees.

4. County Health District: Mr. Serafin reported that following the last Health Services Advisory Board meeting he wrote a memo to the County BOL with his recommendation for a County-wide Health District. Mr. Serafin explained that under the current system there are 32 Health Officers within the county. He further explained that BOL could apply to the NYS Department of Health to become a full county Health District minus the City of Ogdensburg. The City of Ogdensburg could be invited to participate. Mr. Serafin invited all Town Supervisors to a meeting on 11/07/07 to discuss this topic, but only five towns were represented. Mr. Serafin felt the discussion was very in-depth and fruitful on the issue. He will be attending a meeting of Town Supervisors on January 17, 2008. (Subsequently changed to 1/10/08) Some members of the BOL would like a Public Hearing held on the issue. Mr. Serafin pointed out the rationale for this recommendation is that Under Section 340 Of the Public Health Law, were the county to establish a county-wide health district, there would be one board consisting of seven members, 3 of whom would be physicians. If the City of Ogdensburg opted into a county-wide health district, the board would be increased by one member to 8. It would seem that one board of seven to eight members would be a lot more efficient than trying to coordinate multiple boards. Logic dictates that it would be much better to have a stream-lined decision making process in place, not only to anticipate emergencies and have the tough decisions made ahead of time but also to have the ability to make other crucial decisions in a timely matter.

Mr. Serafin feels that if and when this county-wide board is established, it would work closely with the Public Health Bio-Terrorism Department and the County's Emergency Services Department, in making the whole system much tighter. He encouraged HSAB members to educate and push this concept in their areas. He also pointed out that the Towns would save money by not paying for a Health Officer but would still have the option to maintain their Health Officer if they choose. Mr. Serafin noted that it is very difficult for small towns to recruit Health Officers and that currently the County Public Health Director is the Health Officer for 5 communities. Myrna Barney noted from her experience enforcement throughout the County is difficult due to lack of uniformity. There was a discussion on compensation, if any, for board members serving on a county-wide health board. Compensation would be a decision for the BOL.

5. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: Mr. Serafin reported that Jane Foley, from State DOH had visited the agency and the Education Law that applies to the County scholarship Program had been one topic of discussion. He shared with her correspondence from Assembly Woman Dierdre Scozzafava dated 4/5/2000 where an attempt had been made

to expand the professions the scholarship program would fund to include: occupational therapists, dental hygienists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists, social workers, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. The main objective of the scholarship awards is to have the students remain in St. Lawrence County upon graduation. Dr. Gruda would like to see a category for pharmacist included in the categories eligible to apply. Dr. Gruda also suggested a low interest loan program rather than scholarship where the loan amount would be reduced each year the participant remained in county practicing given profession. He feels people bolt out of the county because our grant is small and easy to pay off. He noted an average beginning salary for a pharmacist in St. Lawrence County is \$97,000. It was decided that Mr. Serafin will write to Assemblywoman Scozzafava and request her to sponsor a bill expanding the current Education Law which allows health scholarships funded by individual counties. The scholarship time line was reviewed and the committee will need to meet to review and update the application.

It was suggested that perhaps marketing of the program could be enhanced, perhaps assistance from SLU and Clarkson. Perhaps Pat Kelly from the county economic development program could help sort out what is sent out.

6. ARC-CHHA – Mr. Serafin reported that he is having a meeting with St. Lawrence County ARC next week to encourage them to recruit professionals we need for our CHHA, EI and Pre-K programs. We need more choices and better rates.

7. HEALTHY LIVING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM Kindra Cousineau administers the Healthy Living Partnership Program. Ms. Cousineau explained that the program goal is to provide screening mammograms, breast exams, pelvic exams, and Pap smears for eligible women: colorectal screening for men and women age 50 and older; prostate education for men. Colon screening was recently expanded to provide treatment for anyone diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Eligibility requirements include being a St. Lawrence County resident, uninsured, underinsured and meet the financial eligibility requirements. This program provides access for care to those persons who otherwise cannot afford these services. Ms. Cousineau reported that she recently rewrote a 5 year grant for continuation of these services. The State is mandating that the name of the program be changed to Cancer Services Partnership Program. There was discussion regarding this and what a negative impact it will have on the program. It was suggested that letters be sent encouraging the program name remain the same. Mr. Serafin stated that this may be something to discuss at NYSACHO.

8. MOMS PROGRAM: Ms. Cousineau reported that the program Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services Program (MOMS) eligibility is based on the size of family and gross income, and being a St. Lawrence county resident. A pregnant woman is able to count the pregnancy and therefore considered a family of two. Ms. Cousineau explained that this program provides support through education and information to pregnant women and their families. PH has signed agreements with physicians within the county to serve under this program. The physicians receive a higher reimbursement rate if they participate. The clients receive free pregnancy tests, complete prenatal care and delivery services (provided by a private MD),

prenatal vitamins, access services through WIC, DSS and PH Nurses and more.
Health care for pregnant woman for up to two months after delivery and infant care
for the first year and HIV counseling and testing.

Statistics from this past year for the HLP Program:

9 – Breast Cancer
5 - Cervical
2 - Colorectal Cancer
178 men & women screened for colorectal cancer
790 women screened for Breast and Cervical cancer

The next meeting of the Health Services Advisory Board will be **March 25,**
2008.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sherry Cryderman
Recording Secretary