



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 11, 2023 COLLEEN A. GUNNIP, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Chase, Ms. Kuhn, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Bush

ALSO ATTENDING: See attached list

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. **PERSONNEL:** Dr. Kathryn Anderson, Health Commissioner; Ann Debejian, Personnel

a. Personnel Resolution

- Hiring Emergency Placement Program (HELP) allows to recruit, hire, retain talent outside of the Civil Service process
- Titles requesting to add:
 - Communicable Disease Investigators
 - Community Health Counselors
 - Public Health Educators
 - Public Health Social Work Assistants (Spanish speaking)
 - Vital Record Specialists
 - WIC Assistants (Spanish speaking)
- Deadline to submit titles to NYS for approval is December 31, 2023
- Employees will be hired as permanent
- This request is not amending the budget
- Have significant vacancies, particularly in nursing

A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Dr. Chase, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

2. **HEALTH:** Dr. Kathryn Anderson, Health Commissioner; Mariah Senecal-Reilly; Substance Use Initiatives Coordinator; Jennifer Parmalee, Deputy Commissioner DCFS; Megan Rooney, Deputy Commissioner DCFS

a. INFORMATIONAL: Opioid Funding

Grant received by Health Department

- Opioid settlement funds used in a wide variety of ways
 - Supported purchase and utilization of mass spec machines for Medical Examiner's office
 - Machines generate data for opioids and other drugs of abuse
 - Data generated includes:
 - Causes of death
 - Data on DWI's and what people had in their systems
 - Expanded PAX good behavior game
 - Intended to build resiliency in children
 - Currently in a subset of schools
 - Proving to be a very valuable program
 - Teachers have been trained to use PAX while teaching as opposed to a separate curriculum
 - PAX is used in Pre-K through 4th grade
 - Health Department uses program mostly in the Syracuse City School District

- Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) offers the program as well
- Program has seen:
 - Better graduation rates
 - Less likely to begin using substances
 - Lower rates of suicide and mental health conditions
- Harm reduction has been an active area and growing
 - Over the last 10 years overdoses, Fentanyl and deaths have increased
 - Have seen a 20% decrease in deaths each year over the last 2 years
 - Number of overdoses has not gone down
- Have been able to do the following with settlement funds:
 - Trained 1,600 people on how to administer Narcan; given out 2,700 kits in 2023
 - Given out over 11k fentanyl test strips
 - Been able to keep 2 Narcan distribution and education employees on board
 - Naloxone program at Catholic Charities
 - Have a community van that is actively providing peer support, syringe disposal/exchange
 - Increasingly distributing wound care supplies and partnering with Upstate for Xylozine associated wound care

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Where does the van go?
 - 6 different sites throughout the city and 1 suburb community; each day a different site
 - Sites are within target areas with the highest overdoses
 - Van is unmarked
- How do people know about the van?
 - Clients know through agency promotion, signage while van is in the area, and word of mouth
 - Posted on website
 - Signage is posted outside van with every set up
- How does the Health Department decide which suburb to go to?
 - Determination is based on which suburb wants to host
- What is the problem with suburbs?
 - Have not had opportunity to partner with organizations that can promote
- Is there capacity to expand if there is interest in outlying areas?
 - Yes, if demand increases, sites can be added which would result in hiring additional staff
 - For safety, at least 2 staff members are sent to each site
- Are there statistical numbers that show which suburbs would benefit?
- Would it be helpful for Legislators to talk to community partners?
 - The van is currently operating in places that have the highest number of overdoses and rates of use
 - It would be helpful if we can expand to other areas
- Who are the personnel in the van?
 - Public Health Educator
 - Community Health Counselor (provides education for safety and cleanliness; not therapy)
 - Peer Support person
- Is the fentanyl strips initiative targeting colleges as well?
 - Done outreach; colleges have not asked for participation
 - Have partnered with student organizations to hand out test strips
- Glad to hear the program is working out good
 - Started syringe services program in December 2022
 - The van has been very helpful for both staff and clients

- Is there additional settlement money?

Law Department

- Additional settlement money is in the works

Health Department

- Additional funds would make a huge difference; thank you for your support

Grants received by other agencies:

- Hiring clinical staff has been challenging
- Some agencies are spending 10%, others up to 50-60% of their year one funding
- Red House has already written their event and are rehearsing

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Do you have a list of who has received funding?
 - Red House - Opioid awareness
 - Crouse Hospital - Addiction treatment services
 - Arise - Support outpatient mental health clinic
 - Center for Court Innovation – Westside Community First program
 - Catholic Charities – Harm reduction and recovery support
 - Health Department
 - DA’s office – Investigation on how drugs are coming into the community
- What is the Justice Group doing?
 - Working with unhoused population to distribute fentanyl test strips and death prevention related work
 - Catholic Charities is working on feasibility study with SUNY Binghamton for Supervised Consumption Site
- Is a Supervised Consumption Site where clients can have illegal drugs?
 - Concept is a safe facility to use substance of choice
 - Clients are monitored for health crisis or overdose
 - Facilities are connected to a range of supportive services
 - NYC has 2 successful nonprofit facilities
- Do they get many people?
 - Exact numbers are unknown, but there is enough demand to stay open
 - Need to think about positive efforts of engagement and how that reflects on those getting access to treatment
 - Supports individuals to where they feel safe in order to move to a level of functionality
- These facilities do not have the resources to get individuals off drugs, but can direct them?
 - Feasibility study will help understand what works and what does not work
 - New Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center opening 12/11/2023
 - Concept is to have urgent care setting that has peers, mental health support, substance use support
- What is the capacity?
 - Daytime capacity has not been determined
 - Overnight capacity is 4-6 adults and 4-6 children
 - Covers 5 counties

Comment from Chair Gunnip:

- Would like to recognize Ms. Kuhn and Dr. Chase on their last day on the Health & Human Services Committee
- Thank you for everything you have done

A motion was made by Chair Gunnip seconded by Mr. Bush, to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**
DATE: **DECEMBER 11, 2023**

| NAME (Please Print) | DEPARTMENT/AGENCY |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Ann DeBejian | Personnel |
| Jennifer Tomala | DCFS |
| Katie Anderson | OCHD |
| Mariah S-Reilly | OCHD |
| Megan Rooney | DCFS |
| Ben Yaus | Law Dept. |
| John Desantis | Leg. |
| Jim Beebe | Leg. |
| Tim Frateschi | Counsel |