



# Onondaga County Legislature

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## WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE 2015 TENTATIVE BUDGET HEALTH DEPARTMENTS A.M. – SEPTEMBER 17, 2014 DAVID H. KNAPP, CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Jordan, Mr. May, Ms. Williams, Mrs. Ervin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Holmquist, Mr. Kilmartin

ALSO PRESENT: Chairman McMahon, Mr. Corl, Mrs. Tassone, Mr. Plochocki, Mr. Liedka, Dr. Chase; also see attached

Chairman Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

**Social Services – Department of Economic Security:** Sarah Merrick, Commissioner (4-76)



COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

### Department of Social Services-Economic Security

Child Support ♦ Day Care ♦ Fair Hearings ♦ Fraud ♦ HEAP ♦ Medicaid ♦ SNAP ♦ Systems ♦ Temporary Assistance

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Joanne M. Mahoney  
County Executive

Sarah G. Merrick  
Commissioner

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#### PROPOSED 2015 ONONDAGA COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S BUDGET DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY PREPARED STATEMENT FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

#### INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, Chairman Knapp and fellow Ways and Means members. Thank you for the opportunity to present the 2015 County Executive's Department of Social Services – Economic Security's proposed budget. Over the next few minutes, I will be giving you an update on the impact the human services re-organization has had on this department, as well as, an overview of program activities, including the impact NYS's Medicaid takeover of administrative duties is having on current operations, as well as, what is expected for the future.

#### RE-ORGANIZATION

The human services re-organization that commenced the first of this year, has allowed this department to have a singular focus on providing public benefits to community members in need in the most effective and efficient manner. Also, as a new Commissioner, these two changes have allowed us the opportunity to re-look at how we are perceived by the community and how we operate all of our programs.

Earlier this year, I held a series of "Meet & Greets" with staff to get a sense of their concerns and listen to any potential improvements we could make. At these gatherings, I talked about the importance of providing quality customer service to our community members in need, as well as, ensuring them that they will have the support and training necessary to successfully complete their jobs.

It became clear that the Department needed to re-define our Mission. Senior management and a committee with staff representatives across the entire department developed the following:

Mission (See Power Point Presentation)

The mission of the Department of Social Services-Economic Security is to accurately and efficiently administer economic support and services to county residents in a respectful manner where each person is treated fairly.

Based on state and federal guidelines, financial eligibility for economic assistance will be determined. Once eligibility has been established, our employees will be responsible to deliver benefits and provide quality customer services in a timely, efficient, and dignified manner. Our goal is to support customers at their highest level of independence. The delivery of services will be conducted in a safe and supportive environment for both employees and customers.

Currently, this cross sectional committee is working on finalizing the vision, core skills, values, outcomes and measures essential to reach our mission. Note that baseline information from clients, community agencies and staff has been collected and will be used to help us measure our change.

In October, the department is launching a six-month supervisory training. The above strategic direction will be re-enforced, as well as, giving them both technical and soft skills to become even more effective mentors, coaches and, when necessary, disciplinarians. Next spring, all staff will be trained in providing effective customer service. These trainings will be the first steps in bringing the mission and vision to action.

PROGRAMS

As an overview, the public benefits issued through this department impact the lives of over 25% of our county's population. These benefits range from temporary assistance (cash), SNAP (food stamps), energy assistance (HEAP), day care subsidies, child support and medical insurance (Medicaid). Before the great recession that started in December 2007, the numbers of households seeking our assistance were at record lows. Even with the bounce back of the local economy, our program recipient numbers are staying at high levels.

As you can see in the following graphs (refer to Power Point):

Temporary Assistance

Temporary Assistance - Family Assistance									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./Dec 2007 vs. 2014
Family Assistance - Households (Cases)	2,380	2,631	3,152	3,398	3,445	3,568	3,501	3,493	46.76%
Family Assistance - Individuals	5,979	6,557	8,197	9,024	9,197	9,663	9,639	9,592	60.43%

Temporary Assistance - Safety Net									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./Dec 2007 vs. 2014
Safety Net - Households (Cases)	1,630	1,876	2,369	2,653	2,964	2,898	2,922	3,043	86.69%
Safety Net - Individuals	2,859	3,177	3,919	4,367	4,788	5,021	5,142	5,453	90.73%

SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)

SNAP (Food Stamps)									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./Dec 2007 vs. 2014
SNAP - Households (Cases)	19,541	22,437	28,282	31,682	34,944	36,627	37,303	39,996	104.68%
SNAP - Individuals	41,559	47,480	58,950	64,890	69,628	72,166	72,452	73,363	76.53%

Subsidized Child Care

Subsidized Child Care									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./Dec 2007 vs. 2014
DayCare - Average Monthly Cases	3,100	3,116	3,245	3,443	3,721	3,927	3,785	3,781	21.97%

- As you all know, providing day care subsidies is the key to keeping individuals employed. Without reliable, safe and affordable care, many low income households would end up needing temporary assistance.

## HEAP

HEAP									
								As of July	% Inc./ (Dec)
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2007 vs. 2014
HEAP - Households (Cases)	10,448	10,832	12,370	11,698	10,292	8,212	7,518	9,938	-4.88%
HEAP - Individuals	22,173	22,855	25,999	24,227	21,079	16,928	15,895	22,135	-0.17%

## Child Support

Child Support							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014
Number of Households (Cases)	14,487	14,424	14,515	14,337	14,147	13,633	16,529
Total Collections	\$48,138,665	\$47,459,836	\$47,198,279	\$47,487,866	\$47,509,412	\$46,453,198	\$45,579,730

## Medicaid

Medicaid									
								As of July	% Inc./ (Dec)
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2007 vs. 2014
Medicaid - Households (Cases)	36,995	38,157	42,361	45,976	49,977	51,489	54,220	52,680	42.40%
Medicaid - Individuals	53,998	54,779	51,254	66,150	72,687	76,195	80,716	77,583	43.68%

## Summary Information

DSS - ES Annual Transactions									
								As of July	% Inc./ (Dec)
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2008 vs. 2014
Number of Transactions	N/A	477,212	545,656	570,837	638,099	651,990	686,443	396,694	42.50%

NYS state has provided the department with data that gives you a profile of our recipients. (See Power Point Presentation) Based on the demographic information and local economy, we foresee no significant reduction in the community residents seeking these benefits. Therefore, you will see no significant changes in the 2015 County Executive's proposed budget in the program allocations areas.

Currently, there are 6,292 households receiving temporary assistance. 49% are deemed able to work. Through our partnership with JobsPlus!'s, those employable are getting jobs. In 2011, we had 2372 people entered employments; in 2012, 2560 individuals; in 2013, 2689 individuals; and as of July 2014, 1280 people. All individuals, or 51%, who are unable to work due to a physical &/or mental health limitation are monitored closely. Staff is indicating that those individuals who are exhibiting these limitations are requiring more intensive case management. As many of this cases as possible are turned over to our Social Security Transitions Unit, to work on getting SSI/SSD benefits which raises the monthly cash benefit they receive and enables us to close their temporary assistance case.

Not represented in the main program areas above is the tremendous work our Fraud and Resource Recovery unit does. Last year over \$14 million dollars in cost avoidance, disqualification and recoveries were obtained. This unit's works affirms the fiduciary responsibilities we have to taxpayers.

Every one of these program operations requires a great deal of customer interaction. We continue to look at a wide range of methods to make working with the department as easy as possible.

- Encouraging individuals to use the New York State MyBenefits site to apply
- Encouraging individuals to mail in or drop off required information at drop off boxes
- Operating various call centers for Temporary Assistance, SNAP, HEAP and Medicaid
- Having walk-in, waiting rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> floor Civic Center and 7<sup>th</sup> floor COB
- Using robo calling to remind recipients of key renewal dates so benefits are unnecessarily cut off

And as an effort to improve customer service, we are continuing to look at technological improvements and social media options to better connect and serve our consumers.

MEDICAID (Refer to Power Point Presentation)

I want to conclude my remarks by giving you an overview of NYS's proposed takeover of Medicaid administration. As you know, for nearly five decades, the responsibility of determining the eligibility for public health insurance, Medicaid, has been the role of local department of social services. In April 2012, NYS Legislature passed a law mandating the State takeover of the administrative function of this program. At that time, the Legislature set a goal that all administrative

responsibilities would be transferred by March 31, 2018. They have allowed NYS Department of Health to accomplish this with state staff, contracted entities, and contracts with counties.

In the first phase of the State takeover, such activities as Medicaid Managed Care enrollments and disenrollments, determining eligibility for the Family Health Plus and management of Medicaid Transportation (something Onondaga contracted out years ago), have all been transferring to the state or contracted entities at a conservative pace.

On October 1, 2013, New York State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace, began accepting applications for coverage effective January 1, 2014. The significance of the Marketplace for the State Administration of Medicaid is that most Medicaid applications for households with adjustable gross incomes are now being processed by the Marketplace and not by the LDSS. The eligibility process for about 65 percent of new applications has shifted from the counties to the state. By January 2015, NYS indicates they will have completely taken over the application process for all of these households. As a reflection of the decrease in new applications for this group, the 2015 County Executive's proposed budget is recommending that 8 funded positions be unfunded.

Originally the State indicated that they would be taking over the annual renewal process for all for households with adjustable gross incomes in 2015. The State has pushed this out to sometime in 2016. Therefore, I do not see the workload in the Medicaid division decreasing next year. Also, based on information known at this time, the State will still hold counties responsible for handling the application, renewal and daily maintenance for households where the gross income is not adjustable. As of now, the State has not reduced our Medicaid Administrative funds. Finally, as the takeover unfolds and it becomes clearer from the State, what roles they are interested in having counties assume, major decisions will have to be made at the local level.

In conclusion, I want to extend my appreciation to the 400 plus departmental staff for their hard work and serving our most vulnerable community members.

Thank you for your time and attention. I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

## Department of Social Services – Economic Security

2015 Budget Presentation  
September 17, 2014  
Sarah G. Merrick  
Commissioner

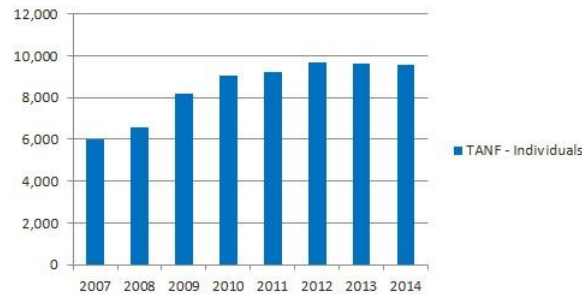
### DSS – ES Mission Statement

- Mission Statement – The mission of the Department of Social Services – Economic Security is to accurately and efficiently administer economic support and services to county residents in a respectful manner where each person is treated fairly.

# DSS – ES Program Information

## Temporary Assistance - Family Assistance

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./ (Dec) 2007 vs. 2014
Family Assistance – Individuals	5,979	6,557	8,197	9,024	9,197	9,663	9,639	9,592	60.43%

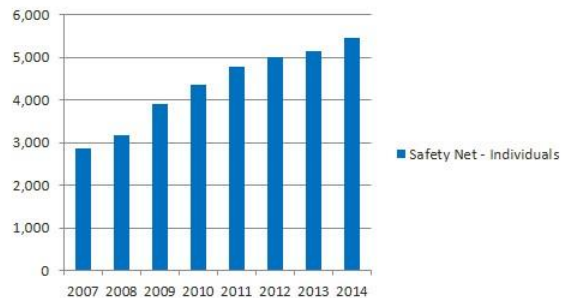


\*\*\* - All data presented is based on information published by the New York State Commissioners Dashboard.

# DSS – ES Program Information

## Temporary Assistance - Safety Net

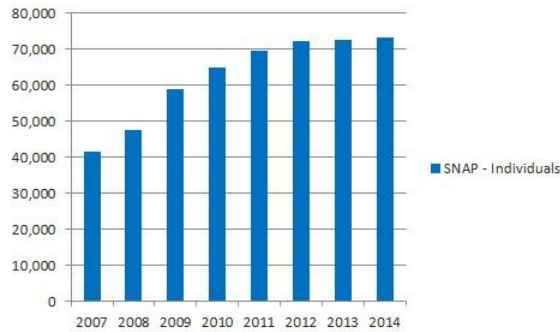
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./ (Dec) 2007 vs. 2014
Safety Net - Individuals	2,859	3,177	3,919	4,367	4,788	5,021	5,142	5,453	90.73%



# DSS – ES Program Information

## SNAP ( Food Stamps)

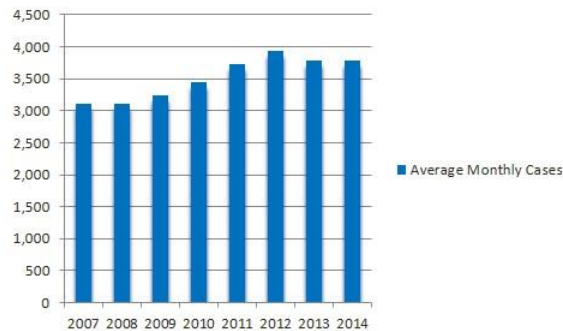
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./{(Dec) 2007 vs. 2014
SNAP - Individuals	41,559	47,480	58,950	64,890	69,628	72,166	72,452	73,363	<b>76.53%</b>



# DSS – ES Program Information

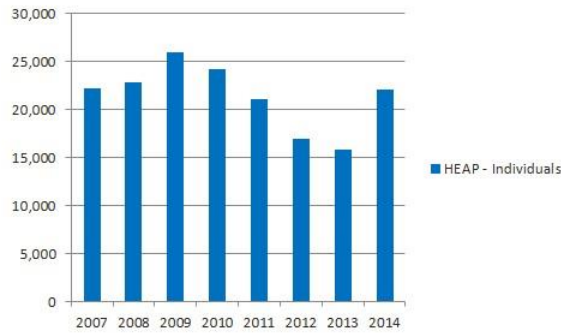
## Subsidized Child Care

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./{(Dec) 2007 vs. 2014
Average Monthly Households (Cases)	3,100	3,116	3,245	3,443	3,721	3,927	3,785	3,781	21.97%



# DSS – ES Program Information

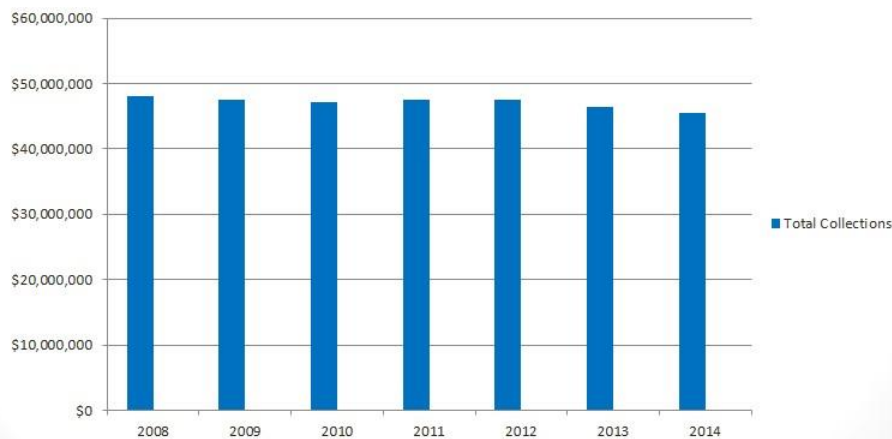
HEAP								As of July	% Inc./Dec)
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2007 vs. 2014
HEAP - Individuals	22,173	22,855	25,999	24,227	21,079	16,928	15,895	22,135	-0.17%



\*\*\* - Individuals served are contingent on the Federal/State HEAP annual allocation.

# DSS – ES Program Information

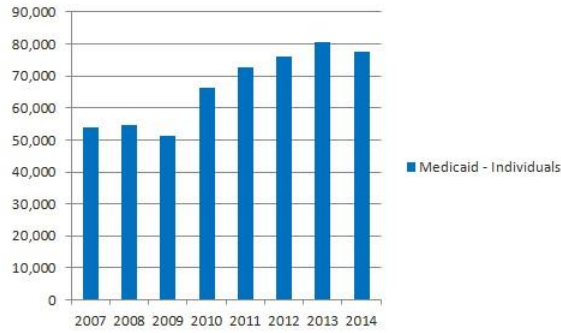
Child Support							As of July
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of Households (Cases)	14,487	14,424	14,515	14,337	14,147	13,633	16,529
Total Collections	\$48,138,665	\$47,459,836	\$47,198,279	\$47,487,866	\$47,509,412	\$46,453,198	\$26,588,175*



\*\*\* - 2014 Projection is based on Collections thru July - \$45,579,730

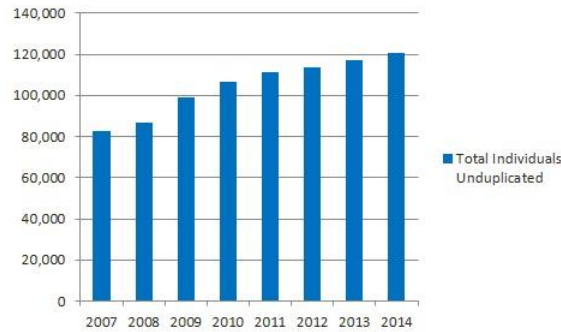
# DSS – ES Program Information

Medicaid									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./ (Dec) 2007 vs. 2014
Medicaid - Individuals	53,998	54,779	51,254	66,150	72,687	76,195	80,716	77,583	43.68%



# DSS – ES Program Information

Total Individuals Unduplicated Count									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./ (Dec) 2007 vs. 2014
DSS - ES Individuals	82,798	86,664	99,205	106,331	111,409	113,872	117,029	120,634	45.70%

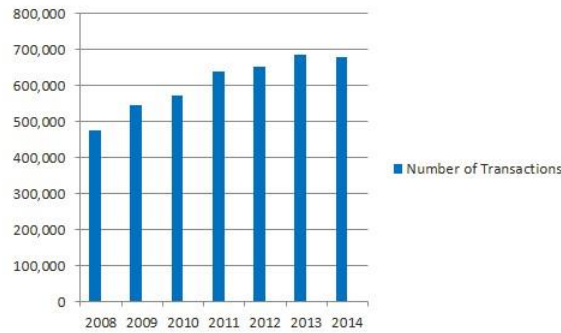




# DSS – ES Program Information

DSS - ES Annual Transactions

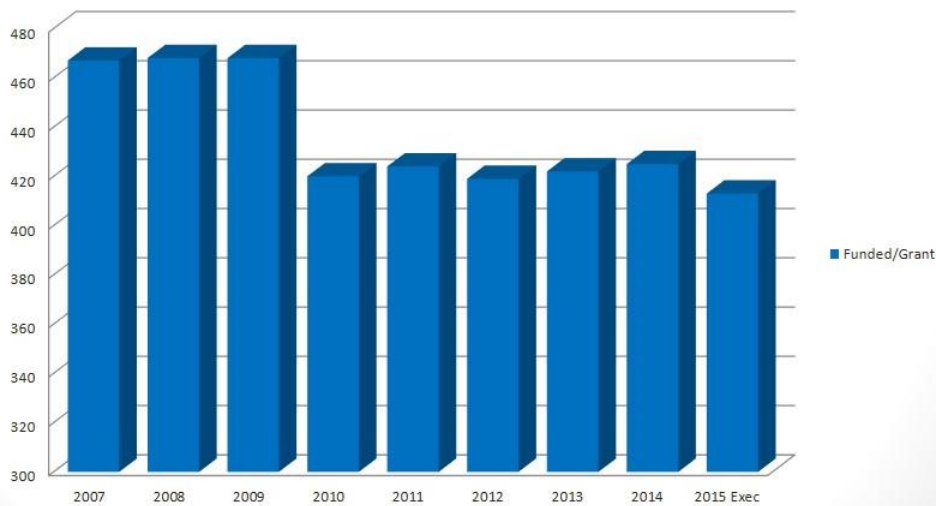
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	As of July 2014	% Inc./.(Dec) 2008 vs. 2014
Number of Transactions	N/A	477,212	545,656	570,837	638,099	651,990	686,443	396,694	42.50%



\*\*\* - 2014 Projection is based on transactions thru July – 680,046

# DSS – ES Funded Positions

DSS-ES Positions  
Adjusted for 2014 Reorganization



## Families/Individuals on Temporary Assistance Characteristics

### Characteristics:

- Number of Cases – 6292
- Average Age – 39
- Households with Dependent Children – 69%
- Head of Household Obtained High School Degree/GED – 33%
- Head of Household Obtained College Degree – 1%
- Percent of Individuals on Assistance Unable to Work due to Physical/Mental Health Situation – 51.2%

## NYS Medicaid Administration Transition Timeline

### 2012

- In April, NYS Legislature passed law mandating takeover by March 2018.

### 2013

- State took over managed care enrollments & disenrollments, applications for family planning benefits, and Medicaid transportation, etc.
- State launched NYS Health Exchange in October.
  - Applications from households with gross adjustable income, shifting some application work from the County to State.

### 2014

- Delayed major takeover to calendar year 2015.

### 2015

- Proposed takeover of approximately 54% of open cases.

### 2016 to 2018

- Proposed defining future roles for county.
- Proposed takeover of remaining community and chronic care cases.

- Most of cash given on temporary assistance is for rent
- Recommend 8 positions be unfunded – state taking over Medicaid

Mr. Jordan stated when the reorganization was proposed, there was no representation or commitment that it would result in savings. Mr. Jordan is concerned that they have not seen any savings, and the budgets have gone up; perhaps it is out of their control. There was a lot of time and tax payer money spent on the reorganization, and it has not resulted in any savings for the tax payers; if anything the cost has gone up. Why, between the three budgets, is there almost a three million dollar increase? Mr. Jordan stated it is concerning that costs have gone up when they've supposedly streamlined the operations. Ms. Merrick replied:

- This dept. has mandated services; public benefit services mandated by federal government
- Need to serve people presented; if meet financial eligibility requirements set by Fed and State, then must serve them
- Lot of costs dependent upon community being able to find gainful employment; half people presenting have limitations which prevent them from having gainful employment
- Doing everything can; passing on savings in reduction in Medicaid area as work goes to State; will see more savings in that area, but for the most part these are mandated services; must serve those financially eligible

Mr. Jordan stated that has always been the case, but now there is a three million dollar jump in one year. It seems that the reorganization has not benefited the tax payers at all. It may have benefited the recipients, but the costs are going up. Mr. Morgan commented that the increases in the three departments would have been there regardless of the reorganization. The administrative costs for these departments is not increasing. What is increasing is the programmatic costs, which would be the same costs if they were in the old departments or new departments. Mr. Morgan stated Ms. Merrick's department's local dollars are going up less than one percent. There are increases, but they are not related to the reorganization. The increase would have been there regardless. Mr. Jordan is asking for specifics. Under 590035 they are showing a decrease in revenues of \$1.2 million. Mr. Jordan would like an explanation of why the revenues have gone down. Mr. Morgan replied part is Medicaid recovery (no local dollar impact), because the less money that is brought in means less money turned over to the Federal and State Government. The only number impacting the bottom line is the repayment of assistance for those on assistance that the County receives child support payments for. This can be explained by the reduction of child support collection, and the steadying of the case load. These are all occurring regardless of what organization these departments are in. Mr. Jordan said the department indicates a \$900,000 decrease in State aid, and asked if this is across the board. Mr. Morgan responded:

- Direct appropriations going down \$1 million; total appropriations down \$867,000
- County receives Fed. and State aid for programs, so as expenditures go down, County will lose revenue because it does not have those expenses
- Reduction in administrative costs related to Medicaid take over perversely impacts County in negative way
- Reimbursement for Medicaid admin expenses is at 100% because of cap (includes local share of Medicaid costs as well as administration); currently County spends \$1 on Medicaid, and receives \$1 in reimbursement
- State starts to take over Medicaid and reduce costs - costs go away completely or are shifted to areas w/local dollars
- County cannot charge overhead; charges based on headcount; as Medicaid staff goes down, will continue to see this
- Will decrease expenses where possible, but in terms of overhead expenses (i.e. rent) – those spread based on direct headcount in those areas; driving some revenue decrease as well

Mr. Jordan commented it gives with one hand, and takes with the other. Mr. Morgan said as the work goes away, the costs go away, and that is what they are committed to do. If not, then those costs will be spread to areas that have local dollars. There will always be the overhead piece; if it is still there, then it will go somewhere else. Mr. Jordan said that is a whole other issue. Mr. Jordan stated Mr. Morgan is saying on one hand the reimbursement is going down and case loads are going down, but the costs are going up, because benefit costs are going up. Mr. Morgan responded that the administrative costs are not going up. The budget overall shows the administrative costs going down. Mr. Jordan said when he asked about the decrease in revenue, Mr. Morgan said it was because the case loads are going down. Mr. Jordan is not sure why the programmatic costs are going up, and the reimbursements are going down, because the case load is going down. Mr. Morgan said the program costs are going down, so the revenue is going to decrease because of that. It is the nature of the program being federally and state reimbursed; spend less, pay less. Mr. Morgan responded to Mr. Jordan that the costs are not going up; the appropriations are going down. Mr. Jordan stated the total bottom line costs are going up by almost \$1.2 million. Mr. Morgan commented that is local dollars, and the appropriations are actually decreasing. The revenue is driving the increase in local dollars. The costs of the department are decreasing; the revenue side of the equation is explaining it. It is the \$400,000 related to child support, the \$866,000 associated with decreased program expenses, and the shift of expenses away from Medicaid. That explains this budget in a nutshell. Mr. Morgan said he would be happy to sit down with Mr. Jordan and go through it. Chairman Knapp stated part of the confusion was at the very beginning of Mr. Jordan's question when Mr. Morgan said the overall program going up three million dollars was because of increased benefit payouts; which would have increased the budget regardless of the structure of it. Now Mr. Morgan is saying the case load is down, and the benefits payments are up. Mr. Morgan clarified that the three million dollars is across three departments, and the costs would have been there regardless of the restructuring. Mr. Morgan thought the question was why the costs were going up because Mr. Jordan thought the County was going to be more efficient. Mr. Morgan was responding to that, and apologized if he misunderstood the question. Mr. Jordan said the explanation of why costs are increasing three million dollars is because the benefits paid out (mandated programs). Mr. Morgan stated he did not say that. Mr. Jordan felt that Chairman Knapp and he got the same impression from Mr. Morgan's answer. Mr. Morgan said he did not say the benefits were going up, and if he did, then he misspoke. Mr. Jordan asked why there is an increase of three million dollars. Mr. Morgan replied that he explained the Department of Social Services for the committee in terms of why local dollars are going up. The appropriations are going down, which is not driving the local dollar increase. Chairman McMahon asked if the reimbursements are going down. Mr. Morgan answered partly as a result of decreased appropriations (spend less, get less for reimbursable money). **Chairman McMahon requested a detailed narrative of what is going on, so the committee's questions can be answered.** Mr. Morgan agreed.

Mr. Jordan is curious to know the impacts. Mr. Jordan thought the County was receiving extra money back from the federal government, because the benefits exceeded what the federal government requires in terms of health insurance coverage under Obama Care. It looks like the County is actually paying money out to the federal government. What impact has the expansion of eligibility for public assistance benefits and requirements of Obama Care had on the County's costs. Ms. Merrick responded that Obama Care only affects Medicaid. The other programs are distinct programs with distinct funding streams. The County is getting some money back for populations that NYS already served. Other states were encouraged to pick up a portion of the population that NYS already felt it was important to offer health insurance to. Mr. Morgan commented:

- Affordable Care Act – impact on local dollars related to enhanced federal reimbursement for expanded population
- Part of plan to expand coverage to citizens was to expand Medicaid program; NY already did that
- For states that didn't do this, fed gov't promised to cover 100% of costs; some states have not opted in – their choice
- NY already expanded program to that population; County – fed gov't agreed to pay for increasing higher percentage of that population already expanded coverage to; roughly 50%; will ratchet up to 90% over a 5 yr period
- Factored in 2014 budget what savings were going to be - after info became available, the state figured out how feds would distribute that money, and how states would spread the money; County overestimated the value of the benefit
- See less of benefit in 2014 and 2015 related to enhanced reimbursement; due to level of cases County has that are eligible for the reimbursement
- County not given hard number, but factored in what benefit would be; receiving less and account is going up

Chairman Knapp asked if after five years, it will start going back down the other way. As far as Mr. Morgan knows, it will stay at the higher percentage (90%). Mr. Morgan replied to Chairman Knapp that the cap is the cap, and if the committee sees the number fluctuate, is because of this factor. In 2015, it is a hard cap, and

the state portion will not grow again. Mr. Morgan said the only variable is the enhanced revenue that the County will have to be mindful of, and ensure they analyze thoroughly (have better numbers when presenting the budget).

Mr. Jordan stated they list a \$976,000 increase due to enhanced FMAP under the Affordable Care Act, and asked if this is an increased expense. Mr. Morgan responded that was what he just explained. The note talks about the enhanced FMAP assumed in 2014, that is lower than it is going to be; pulled into 2015 knowing what the volume was. It was not as high as anticipated. Mr. Jordan asked if the \$976,000 is what the department expects to receive in 2015. Mr. Morgan replied that is what they expect to pay out; increase in the account. The \$976,000 is the amount that the County overestimated the benefit to be. Mr. Morgan answered Chairman Knapp that they are correcting an error based on an estimate of what they thought the FMAP was going to be. This is why the committee sees the account going up almost one million dollars. Mr. Jordan asked if that was in terms of 2014's budget. Mr. Morgan responded in terms of 2015's budget. The difference between 2014 and 2015 is \$976,000.

Chairman McMahon stated on the fraud side of the department there is fourteen million in savings, and asked how much fraud is out there that is missed. Ms. Merrick responded:

- Hard question to answer; train eligibility staff to be aware of key factors in saying this case needs to be reviewed and investigated by fraud unit; the fraud unit goes out to investigate – 2 things can happen
- (1) because of information fraud unit collects, don't open the case; save by not spending the money
- (2) work to identify where active cases have fraud; send out investigation; close when have facts for those not eligible
- Balance on how much staff they want to put on fraud end, and how much staff needed to determine eligibility
- Department serves thousands seeking benefits; balancing act on using resources

Ms. Merrick agreed with Chairman McMahon that the fourteen million includes personnel costs for time. Chairman McMahon asked in the event someone commits fraud, how does it breakdown to the budget. How much of it goes to the state, local or federal. If there were more people doing this, what impact would it have on the budget? Ms. Merrick responded:

- Only impact is caseloads potentially decreasing
- In cost avoidance, department doesn't spend money; state gives department value to each month for each program; if someone doesn't get temporary assistance, then value of month is worth this amount of dollars
- When department does cost avoidance, it's not money spent; reflected in case not being opened or case being closed
- Actual collection of money - each program has formulas; much of money is given back to the federal government or state; County gets very little; recovery and money collected go to federal and state government first

Mr. Morgan commented that Ms. Merrick is correct, and there are two pieces to the program. The first is cost avoidance (stop case or close case), and the second is recovering money that was inappropriately paid. When those dollars are brought back in, the amount the County can keep is tied to who pays for it to begin with. If the recovery is made in Medicaid, the County does not pay except for the cap, so the money goes back to the federal and state government. Chairman McMahon said if there were two extra positions in the department, then it would be difficult to quantify what the local dollar savings would be. Mr. Morgan agreed, because the other part is food stamps which is federally paid as well. The main area that the County would receive anything is in Day Care or Safety Net. If there were fraud cases there, the County would be able to keep a piece of that based on the percentage of local dollars the County pays for that program. Chairman McMahon stated part of the budget presentation is capital improvement plans and different things the Legislature is being asked to bond for. Chairman McMahon asked if the contractual expenses line (6957) is where rents are coming out. Mr. Morgan responded no, that it would be maintenance, utilities and rents. Chairman McMahon asked if Ms. Merrick's department has any renting facilities outside of the Civic Center. Mr. Morgan replied the only facility they rent is Rock West, which is where they keep the case records for the programs. Chairman McMahon stated the Legislature is potentially being asked to bond for property to restructure departments. There are departments with other places throughout the County, and Chairman McMahon assumes there would be decreasing rent lines, if the Legislature was to honor that request. Mr. Morgan agreed that Chairman McMahon would assume that, but that is not what is in the budget. Mr. Morgan stated they would have to provide the Legislature with that information, and if it is something that is supported, then they would reduce those lines appropriately. Mr. Morgan said the Rock West Center is for records, so that is less in the equation. Mr. Morgan responded to Chairman McMahon that it is an ideal department to talk about, because Ms. Merrick has the contract with Jobs Plus. It is not the County's staff, but there is a contract, and the department pays

rent in that contract. Absolutely, it is connected to Ms. Merrick's budget. If the County moves Jobs Plus into the Civic Center, then they would be able to reduce that contract for the line of that rent.

Chairman Knapp asked if WIC is under the Health Department. Ms. Merrick said correct.

Mr. Jordan asked when a fraud investigator is sent out, do the investigators tell the recipients they are coming. Ms. Merrick responded the investigators do not give the recipients a heads up. They go out, knock on the resident's door, and talk with them. Not all issues that the department faces are found to be fraudulent, and the recipient deserves the benefits. There are cases where they document, and move forward on appropriate action; closing case or recovering benefits. Mr. Jordan stated part of his practice is family law. There are people on public assistance with other people living with them, and sharing the rent. When public assistance comes around, the person leaves, so there is no evidence of the person living there. Ms. Merrick commented that the investigators are skilled at listening and asking the right questions; also do surveillance. Ms. Merrick said they try to get the whole picture before rendering a decision. The department wants to ensure that any findings can stand up in a hearing (beneficiary has a right to a fair hearing).

Mrs. Ervin asked how many people are in the fraud unit. Ms. Merrick replied the whole department is eighteen, and there are about twelve investigators; will verify. Mrs. Ervin asked if all they do is investigate fraud. Ms. Merrick said yes. Ms. Merrick replied to Mrs. Ervin that they do thousands of fraud cases on average. In the accomplishment section fraud recovery for last year was five thousand eligibility cases, and two thousand fraud investigations. Those resulted in seven-hundred disqualifications. Ms. Merrick agreed with Mrs. Ervin that the staff is appropriate for what they are trying to accomplish, and they are not looking for anything additional. It's a balance of doing the fiduciary responsibility, and having enough staff to do the eligibility work. Mrs. Ervin asked if the cases are triggered by someone. Ms. Merrick responded there are two ways a case is triggered: (1) people call or email which the department takes very seriously, and (2) the front line workers. The front line workers have certain questions they have to ask the individuals, which triggers a red flag. They let the investigators know, and the investigators do their work. Ms. Merrick answered Mrs. Ervin that the investigators are in the field a lot, and they work on the same floor as Ms. Merrick (seen a lot). There is interface between the eligibility workers and investigators. The investigators spend more than half the day in the field, then come back to put their cases together. The manager of that department reviews, and will work with the District Attorney's Office to move cases that should be moved into that avenue. Mrs. Ervin asked if the second floor is looking any better. Ms. Merrick responded no, but they are working on new signage, redesigning the floor to add more space, and looking at technology improvements to cut down on the lines. The second floor alone averages nine thousand people a month. The department is looking at all ways to expedite moving them along. Currently they have people standing in line for hours, and Ms. Merrick knows that is not good. Ms. Merrick thinks there will be improvements in the very near future. Mrs. Ervin commented whenever she has been there it has not been good. Ms. Merrick said it is a top priority, and it needs to be clearer, more inviting and safer for staff and clients. Mrs. Ervin asked if there is any thought of having a daycare or nursery as well. There are families coming in with children running all over the place. Ms. Merrick stated they just began the process of evaluating whether the second floor can totally be redesigned, and hopes that it will be a component. A space where kids can be provided books or toys, etc. Right now the environment is not appropriate for kids. Mrs. Ervin asked if the staff is being worked with as far as sensitivity, and how to treat people. Ms. Merrick said absolutely. The supervisors need a level of training to help coach, mentor and be disciplinarians for their staff. In the spring there will be comprehensive customer service training with the skills that are ratcheting up with the supervisors; reinforce quality customer service. It will not happen overnight, but in a year Ms. Merrick would like to be able to talk to the Legislature about substantial improvements in sensitivity with people from all walks of life.

Mr. May stated Mr. Morgan did a good job at helping the Legislature understand and digest the reorganization process, and the baseline is only twelve months ago. Getting through this first budget was a lot of work to understand. **Mr. May requested highlights of major areas of change with a small explanation of what the Legislature is looking at (spreadsheet or table).** Mr. Morgan responded that they will put something together to make it more transparent. Mr. May said it is transparent, but it would be nice to see the major lines and revenue spots.

Mrs. Tassone stated the food stamps have doubled since 2007, and asked when someone applies, how soon before they are okayed. Mrs. Tassone assumes they investigate applicants. Ms. Merrick responded it is based on income eligibility. When the recession hit, the first thing the federal government did was expand the food stamps program. The federal government raised the income eligibility. People can earn up to \$44,000 of income (based on family size), and still be eligible for food stamps. The increase has to do with the federal government expanding the amount of money for food stamps, and raising the eligibility level. To be able to get food stamps (like all programs in the department) it is based on household income. The department does an extensive review of the income. Mrs. Tassone was talking to a young gentleman who graduated from SU, lived with his mother and father in a beautiful home, and told Mrs. Tassone he had to use up his food stamps. Mrs. Tassone was dumbfounded that he would be receiving food stamps while living at home with his parents, and asked how they check these things out. Ms. Merrick replied it is set by the federal government, and right now they only look at income. Mrs. Tassone interjected even though a person is living at home with their parents. Ms. Merrick said correct. A person could be making ten thousand dollars a year with five million in assets, but the department is not allowed to look at assets (set by federal government). Food stamps are driven solely by income.

Ms. Williams asked where in the budget the twelve investigators for fraud are. Ms. Merrick responded in the listing of staff (4-81) under fraud and abuse.

Mr. Liedka said there are ten new positions, and asked Ms. Merrick to explain the addition of five people. Ms. Merrick answered that they are unfunding eight positions, moving two positions to financial operations, and the other moves are unfunded positions to ensure there are appropriate titles available. None of these changes are additional staff. Ms. Merrick agreed with Mr. Liedka that the positions are not new, but a wash. There no longer is a stenographer, but they do have an income maintenance worker, so it is a title correction that is not funded.

Dr. Chase stated when the Legislature voted on the reorganization, they were told no one would lose their job, and asked if everyone was okay. Ms. Merrick said absolutely.

**Chairman Knapp requested a list of the contracts.** Chairman Knapp asked if the eight unfunded positions are part of the transition or part of the state takeover of Medicaid. Ms. Merrick replied it is a direct reflection of the state takeover of Medicaid. As work went to the state, Ms. Merrick monitored vacant positions due to retirements, and basically no one is losing their job. The department is losing work, so this is a reflection of that, and two positions will be centrally located out of financial operations. **Chairman Knapp requested a list (by line number) of the eight positions being unfunded, and what is being abolished due to the Medicaid takeover.** Ms. Merrick agreed. Chairman Knapp asked where the department is so far, and how does Ms. Merrick envision the budget for the end of the year. Chairman Knapp stated the Legislature is aware they used a little bit of daycare money to transfer to another department. Ms. Merrick responded they will be well within their budget lines, and will be in very good shape. Chairman Knapp wanted to know if the increase of interdepartmental charges is from the Finance people coming over. Mr. Morgan replied some is for the stock room personnel coming over, and some is from other departments (i.e. Facilities, IT) as well. At least two positions, fringe and associated costs, are coming over into financial operations. Chairman Knapp asked about the all other expenses line (\$36,000). Ms. Merrick believes it will be a cost savings. They are looking at big ideas like customer service training to small ideas that will be cost savings like return mail. The department would send out stamped reply mail to the recipients in hopes that information would be returned. What would happen is that it would not be returned, and the County already incurred the cost. Ms. Merrick stated Mr. Lynch worked with the internal mail system as well as the local post office to pay upfront for postage. The department will now only pay for what is returned. The money will need to be in an account in the post office, and Ms. Merrick believes they would save thirty to fifty thousand by making this change. Chairman Knapp asked about the fifteen thousand dollar increase in professional services. Ms. Merrick answered that child support attorneys are in there. Part of the responsibility of a few contracts is that the department needs to do RFP's on a three to five year basis. One RFP is the child support contracts, and the department is anticipating increasing those contracts a slight margin (this budget accounts for the increase). Chairman Knapp asked what or who the overtime of eighty-two thousand dollars is primarily used for. Ms. Merrick replied it is project based, and they are trying not to use overtime. Overtime is used for times of the year when people take vacation, so summer is hard. Ms. Merrick restated it is project based, and Ms. Merrick monitors it very closely.

**Department of Ault & Long Term Care Services:** Bob Long, Commissioner; Lisa Alford, Deputy Commissioner  
(4-92)

## Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services

2015 Budget Presentation  
Robert C. Long, MPA  
Commissioner

**Mission:** provide and support comprehensive, coordinated services to improve quality of life for adults in Onondaga County

### Service Areas:

- Aging (60+)
- Adult Mental Health (18 +)
- Long Term Care/ NY Connects Onondaga County (all ages)
- Adult Protective (18+)
- Veterans

### Aging Services

- Provides cost-effective community based Long Term Care Services that delay the high expense of institutional care. (Examples: EISEP, MOW, Social Adult Day, In-home Respite).
- Provides a wide range of services that support healthy aging in a community setting. (Examples: transportation, senior center programs, health insurance counseling, information and assistance with applications, legal services.)
- Provides programming and support to caregivers to assist them in meeting the daily challenges of caring for an impaired senior. (Examples: support groups, education and training through I Care, Information and Assistance/Referral services.)

### Long Term Care/NY Connects

- Provides comprehensive and unbiased information and linkage to people of any age seeking Long Term Care services.
- Provides in-home nursing and social assessments to assist families in choosing appropriate levels of care.
- Provides ongoing medically-based care management for children and adults receiving personal care services.

### Adult Mental Health

- Provides County-wide Planning, Quality Improvement, and Training services for mental health, substance use disorders and developmental/intellectual disabilities services.
- Provides access to Case Management and Residential Services to individuals with serious mental illness under the Single Point of Access (SPOA) service.
- Provides court ordered and enhanced care coordination services to individuals under the Assistant Outpatient Treatment Program (AOT) (MHL 9.60)
- Contracts for community services for those with mental illness, substance user disorders and developmental/intellectual disabilities.

## Protective Services for Adults

- The objective of Adult Protective Services (APS) is to keep individuals over the age of 18 safe from harm due to their inability to care for themselves or because of neglect or abuse by others.
- Victims of abuse include:
  - The frail elderly
  - The developmentally disabled
  - The chronically mentally ill
  - The physically disabled
  - Substance abusers.

## Veterans Services

- Assist Veterans with preparing their claims for Federal, State, or Local benefits.
- Assist surviving spouses of Veterans in need of information and those applying for survivor's benefits.
- Assist Veterans with obtaining copies of their official military records and other related papers.
- Assist honorably discharged county Veterans and their spouses who wish to be buried in the Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

## Benefits of 2014 Reorganization

- Shared mission and goals, more coordinated approach to overlapping populations of people served
- Co-location of services
  - Aging, Mental Health and Veterans on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor;
  - Protective Services and LTC on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor

## Benefits of 2014 Reorganization

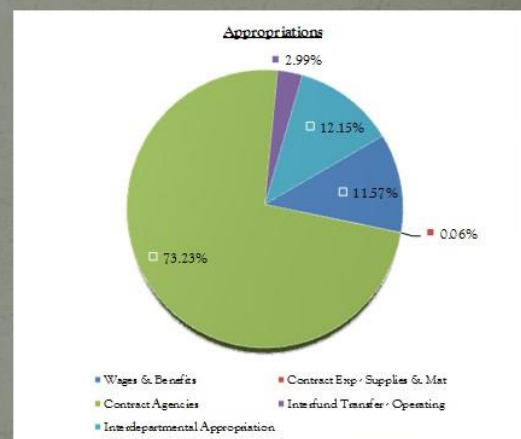
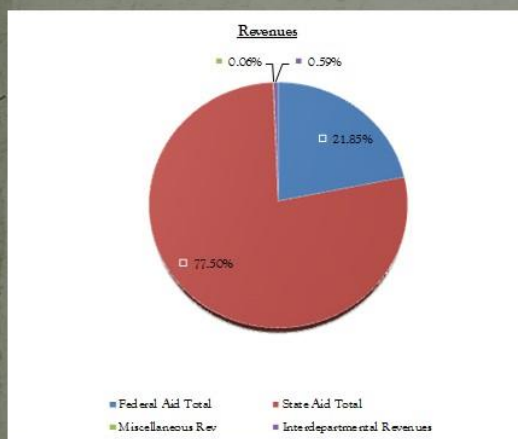
- Development of a more holistic view of our community's needs and resources and shared needs analysis
  - Identifying populations served/overlap between divisions (often the same people are being, or should be, served in multiple divisions within A&LTC)
  - Inventorying and coordinating services and contracts across divisions to maximize services for the money spent and avoid duplication of effort
  - Identifying unmet needs of the clients/the community and programs/staff on a more systemic level, and tailoring services to meet those unmet needs.
  - Identifying future needs and promoting systems level planning
  - Recognizing shared goals and challenges
  - Example: The State is creating a "No Wrong Door" for accessing community services. The existing Onondaga County "New York Connects" program will become the "no wrong door", and will work closely with the Mental Health Single Point of Access (SPOA) to provide access to specialized services. While many counties are struggling with how to coordinate these functions, Onondaga County is already doing it within the Adult and Long Term Care Department.



## Benefits of 2014 Reorganization

- Improved communication between specialized divisions within the Department – with greater knowledge of and access to expertise in each division and greater coordination of services. Examples:
  - Adult Protective Services and Mental Health: helping vulnerable people with mental illnesses who may need access to care coordination or permanent housing. In the past, the Adult Protective was familiar with the emergency housing available through DSS (e.g. shelters), but did not have ready access to permanent, supported housing. The Mental Health Single Point of Access (SPOA) specializes in connecting people with care and with permanent, supported housing. The two divisions have worked together to coordinate services, leading to better outcomes for vulnerable adults with mental illness.
  - Aging and Adult Protective Services: Many of the people who need Adult Protective Services are elderly. These people may need access to community supports like meals on wheels, home care, which is the specialty of the Aging and Long Term Care divisions. Although these divisions have always worked together to coordinate services, the reorganization has led to more familiarity and closer working relationships, leading to better outcomes for vulnerable senior citizens.

## Budget Summary



## Key Budget Changes

- Aging/LTC: Balanced Incentive Program – “No Wrong Door”
  - Establishes New York Connects as the official No wrong door/single point of entry point system in Onondaga County and throughout New York State.
  - Provides conflict-free case management services and establishes a standardized system of data collection and assessment in order to streamline referrals and avoid duplication.
  - Establishes stronger relationships with mental health and developmental disability networks via the use of web-based referrals for more expedient service delivery to people seeking services through those systems.
- Veterans:
  - Clear Path for Veterans
  - Consolidated Budget
- Budget Realignment

Mr. Long:

- Allocation of \$50,000 for Clear Path – serves 30,000 veterans in Onondaga and other counties; program on border of Onondaga and Madison Counties
- In process of opening program in Syracuse for those without transport to site; support ongoing operations
- Veterans - consolidated expenses into Long Term Care budget; \$350,000 reduction in interdepartmental revenue – no longer charging other departments for Veterans expenses; all in one department
- Budget realignments – accurately represent budget
- Budget otherwise flat with the exception of the things mentioned on the above slide

Mr. May asked Mr. Long to explain the addition of a Director of Adult and Protective Services. Mr. Long responded when the Division of Adult and Protective Services was split off from Social Services Economic Security, there were three supervisors in that department, but no one overall overseeing the department. Mr. Long is proposing unfunding one of the three supervisors and creating a Director who would oversee the entire area, and supervise the other two supervisors.

Mr. Jordan knows there are issues in terms of what the County charges for burials in the Veteran’s Cemetery, and the understanding is that the federal government reimburses varying amounts (whether in service or not) towards the burial. It can be significantly more than what the County is charging for veteran burials. Mr. Jordan has heard of several people from out of state sending their deceased relatives here to be buried, because it is so inexpensive; even though the deceased had very little contact with Onondaga County. Mr. Jordan is not sure if that is administered through Mr. Long’s department or the Parks Department. Mr. Long replied it is really three departments. Parks operates the cemetery, Veterans Services office assist veterans who want loved ones buried (taking in money), and DSS handles the non-veterans indigent burials outside the cemetery. Some of what Mr. Long’s department does is tied into the DSS payments as well.

Ms. Dennis:

- \$500 per burial; spouse or disabled child under the age of eighteen can be buried as well
- Person had to have been an Onondaga County resident; those that do not live in this state are eligible if they reenlisted here, listed here, were born/raised and lived here in excess of five years
- Reimbursement – not everyone entitled; criteria to meet – passed away due to illness that the gov’t was paying monthly for, passed away in VA facility (hospital or nursing home), been in receipt of pension from gov’t monthly
- Reimbursement does not exceed \$500 for being buried in the Veteran’s Cemetery; if buried in a public cemetery, the reimbursement is up to \$750

Mr. Jordan heard that in some circumstances the reimbursement could be up to \$1500. Ms. Dennis replied not the burial plot. The burial plus the burial plot is up to \$1500 reimbursement. If the individual is charged \$500 for the plot and they meet one of the criteria, the federal government would only reimburse \$500. The federal

government would not give the maximum amount. Mr. Jordan understands that the government would not reimburse more than what is spent. Mr. Jordan would like to know if the reimbursement is up to \$750, then why is the cemetery charging \$500. Ms. Dennis responded not everyone is entitled. Mr. Jordan said if there is a reimbursement of up to \$750, then there should be a restructuring of the schedule to maximize the reimbursement received. Why are the tax payers subsidizing to bury somebody, if the federal government would otherwise have covered part of that cost? Ms. Dennis reiterated that everyone does not meet the criteria for reimbursement, and the \$500 was set in 2010; last increase. When an indigent is buried, Parks has to eat the cost. If it is raised to \$750, then Parks is paying the \$750. The reimbursement is not for every veteran, and currently they are asking veterans to pay \$500. Mr. Jordan stated the federal government is reimbursing the \$500. Ms. Dennis commented not everyone. Mr. Jordan clarified there are situations in which the County can receive more in terms of reimbursement, but the department is trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. The department is charging everyone the same flat rate regardless of whether they are up for higher reimbursement. Mr. Jordan asked why the department is leaving money on the table. Mr. Long responded that they cannot vary the rate based on whether a reimbursement is available. The federal government would reimburse whatever the normal charge is, so they cannot raise it for those eligible for \$750. Mr. Jordan said they could raise it to mirror their schedules; if individual meets this criteria, then the rate is this. Ms. Dennis said they are then hurting those that are not being reimbursed, not receiving assistance, and have to come out of their own pockets to pay \$500 (or \$1,000 for a loved one); \$1,500 per family. Mr. Jordan asked how that would be punishing the people who do not qualify for the reimbursement. Ms. Dennis replied they are asking for a flat rate which is based off a reimbursement rate to a slim few. Mr. Jordan is suggesting they do not have a flat rate across the board, but rather an adjusted schedule where the rate varies depending on the person's circumstances. Chairman Knapp stated they would have to get legal involved to structure something, because Chairman Knapp doubts the federal government would *carte blanche*. Mr. Jordan believes other counties do it that way. Chairman Knapp said it should be looked into. Ms. Dennis commented that other counties do not have a veteran's cemetery and utilize national cemeteries. National cemeteries are totally free, and veterans do have that option, if they cannot pay privately or for the County's veteran's cemetery. Chairman Knapp said he has had several interactions with Ms. Dennis and her team, and cannot say enough as far as the level of compassion, efficiency and most of all common sense. Chairman Knapp thanked Ms. Dennis for the service to the County's veterans. Ms. Dennis stated to date they have buried thirty indigent families, and they are budgeted for fifty. As winter months go on, the numbers tend to peak, so they are right on target. Ms. Dennis responded to Chairman Knapp that they are indigent veterans. Mr. Long replied to Chairman Knapp that the Legislature would have to talk to Parks as far as space.

Mr. Jordan asked for an elaboration of the professional services, other expenses, and travel and training lines. The travel and training seems high; even though it's a decrease from last year (almost \$55,000). Mr. Long responded a lot of that is mileage to reimburse those in the field; adult protective staff and long term care staff who are traveling out to visit or assess people in their homes. They are paid the flat mileage rate. In addition to that, this year there are monies incorporated including the veteran's services officer's mandatory training to maintain certification (yearly); sometimes available in New York, and sometimes not. In 2014 everyone was sent to Indianapolis. Mr. Morgan said if the committee looks at the maintenance, utilities and rents, and travel and training lines, then they will see a change from the modified. Mr. Morgan said a resolution was brought over early in the year to fix allocations made during the restructuring, and the resolution was a \$0 effect; money was taken from one of the reorganization departments. That is why the committee will see the modified higher than the adopted.

Mr. May asked Mr. Long to talk about the 103 line that is up. Mr. Long said Ms. Merrick discussed the state takeover of Medicaid earlier, which was anticipated for 2014 that the state would take over approximately four hundred to five hundred cases from the Long Term Care Department. By April of 2014 the state has taken over an average of thirteen cases per month, which is substantially fewer. As a result, the department had to transfer funds to cover the staff in that department until the state takes over those cases. This slow pace of takeover will continue through 2015. The staff was reduced in the 2014 budget, and added back in the temporary line in 2015 to continue to manage the cases until the state takes over.

**Chairman Knapp requested a list of their contracts.** Chairman Knapp stated the 101 line is increasing, and asked if they are moving three positions over to Mr. Morgan. Mr. Long responded those positions moved in 2014. Chairman Knapp said there should be a decrease instead of an increase if they moved three positions

out. Mr. Morgan said there is no plan to move any positions from Long Term Care in 2015. Mr. Long agreed with Chairman Knapp that they are moving positions within the department. Chairman Knapp asked what the grant is, how long it is, and what happens to the three positions. Mr. Long replied it is the Balance Incentive Program mentioned earlier. The grant total is about \$800,000: \$150,000 is already in the program, \$125,000 is new state aid, and \$500,000 is new federal aid to expand the program (no wrong door). The additional state aid of about \$125,000 is anticipated to be ongoing, and the \$500,000 federal aid will expire towards the end of 2015. The plan is to use the bulk of the funding to support infrastructure that is a onetime expense (i.e. computer networks, computer databases, and other things that the department can expend the money upfront). Chairman Knapp asked if the three positions would remain after that. Mr. Long responded that they will remain assuming the funding remains. Chairman Knapp wanted an explanation of what the realignment of the resource center positions is. Mr. Long responded the Resource Center is the Long Term Care division that does the Medicaid case management. They are looking to move two positions (three in budget) from the Resource Center to Adult Protective. As the Medicaid case load decreases, the adult protective case load has increased. Mr. Long stated they are looking to balance the workload, which was planned in 2014, but held off because the case load has not come down as expected. Chairman Knapp is happy to see that there is money for Clear Path. When it first started, the County gave \$25,000 upfront; good investment. It has been a tremendous asset for veterans, and Chairman Knapp will wholeheartedly support the \$50,000 for Clear Path.

**Department of Children & Family Services:** David Sutkowy, Commissioner (4-100)

ONONDAGA COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
2015 BUDGET PRESENTATION  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

*I appreciate the opportunity to present our Department's 2015 budget.*

*When I've presented our department's budget in the past, I've always tried to focus on the financial data that you have in front of you and not to talk too much about the organization and program activities, except in so far as they relate to significant financial changes. But this year, I would like to talk a little more generally about our department and services, separate from budget considerations. Both the executive and legislature spent a lot of time and effort last year discussing and in the end approving the realignment of the county human service departments, and I thought I would start this presentation by telling you how we're doing and then move into our budget overview.*

*This new department, the Department of Children and Family Services, is a combination of services previously run through the department of Social Services, Probation, Mental Health, and Aging and Youth.*

*We have organized ourselves into five divisions, which we call Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, Children's Mental Health, School Based Initiatives, and the Youth Bureau.*

*As we see it, our work and efforts need to be at three levels:*

*The first, the foundation of all we do, involves operational integrity within each division and service area. Each of the divisions I mentioned has a specific mission, often a product of federal or state legislation. Very simply, we need to be very good in how we organize and deliver these services. Clients receiving our services and taxpayers who fund them expect us to be effective in our actions and efficient in how we operate.*

*Staying faithful to the mission, and being efficient in operation, of course, has always come with the territory. There really nothing new about this. It didn't require a realignment to pay attention to these fundamentals.*

*But what makes this Department unique begins with the second level of our work.*

*That is the ability to better coordinate and leverage services across these previously separated divisions in a way to better serve families.*

*We know with absolute certainty how critical this coordination work is in delivering services effectively. The reality is that a number of families we work with are active with services in multiple systems. What I mean is that they can be active in mental health services, in child welfare and in juvenile justice, or with services outside our department such as the child's school district. In the past, it's been a struggle to pull all these separate services and interventions together, so that all providers are working together, in the same direction, at the same speed, to help the family.*

*We know from our experience what good coordination can do. I'll give you one example. As part of our department, we now operate the ACCESS Team in the mental health world. There are many very good services operating in the children's mental health system. But it can be difficult and frustrating for parents to know which is the best service for them, and then to cut through the red tape that exists to some degree with all providers to get the service they need. Since many parents whose child has mental health issues call when there is a crisis, time is often of the essence in providing help.*

*Our ACCESS Team does just what its name implies. It helps families who are voluntarily trying to access community services find and get connected to the service that is the best match for their child. Because we've staffed ACCESS with personnel from different disciplines, in this case from the mental health, child welfare and juvenile justice areas, we think we're helpful in seeing the problems and the solutions across systems, and can therefore help families make better matches between what is needed and what is available.*

*You've heard the old adage that if you're a hammer, every problem is a nail. Too often the separate systems operate this way – they define the problem only through the own perspective of their own system, and the solution then, seen through the eyes of that unique system, can be somewhat myopic.*

*We're trying our best not to fall into this trap. Instead, by combining staff from different disciplines, by seeing problems more broadly, and then by trying to address the families' issues through the right service of the right system, we think we can do a more effective job in helping families link with resource that will be most helpful for them.*

*So, these elements of cross-system coordination and team work are really how we're trying to position the entire department, and we're currently working on a number of initiatives on this same theme.*

*Just to give you one example of one of these initiatives we're working on, and on the home stretch of completing, is in the area of school attendance. When a child has had chronic attendance problems in school, and the school is unable to address the problem themselves, school districts have in the past, sought county help through either an educational neglect report to our Child Protective Services hotline, or a PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) referral to our Probation Department. Just to make a long story short, we know that this referral process on which route should be taken hasn't been particularly clear to schools, and that this lack of clarity was undermining the effectiveness of our response. This spring, after our department was created, we sat down with the districts and talked about how we could simplify and streamline their connection with us, so that the referral process is easy and that is clarity in expectations and in our respective roles. What we decided in the end was to centralize all the referrals that come to us through the ACCESS Team for response and action. We're going to do it this way for the simple reason that we don't want to make schools figure out how to negotiate us. We'll take it upon ourselves to coordinate our response internally. We'll conduct the intake, determine how best to respond to the situation in question, and then assign the case to area with the best fit. Because all referrals will come to one place, we'll far more easily be able to track the case handling and ultimately the effectiveness of our interventions on the child's attendance.*

*Just to be frank, this type of cross-system coordination was, while not impossible in the old system, very difficult to achieve.*

*The attendance issue is just one example. There's more we're working on. Besides issues we've already identified, we've tasked ourselves to develop and implement a quality improvement agenda across all divisions to identify more opportunities for this cross systems work, to improve our service delivery and achieve better outcomes for families.*

*But the last focus of our department – the third level – involves something larger.*

*When you look at what we do and how we interact with families, what a lot of it boils down to is that we respond to families in crisis. While that may be a bit of an oversimplification, it isn't by much. Crisis response is really why these child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems were designed. But in my mind, these national systems were predicated on the assumption that if immediate problems of the families' could be addressed, the family would have their own personal resources – anything from family to friends - to meet their own long term needs. I think that this belief in many instances is mistaken. From everything I see, from the data available to me, to talking with line staff, to my personal observations, I believe the reality is that too many children and families continue to struggle, either in their home, their community, or their school, after they exit from our system. Yes, the families has benefited from the help they received from us: Our workers, across all divisions, are extremely skilled in responding to these crisis situations. But I really don't think that you have to look too far to see that children in our community are struggling.*

*What is particularly concerning to me is that these struggles are playing out in the school setting, and ultimately compromising the child's ability to succeed. And success here, in education, is absolutely vital. We all know that*

*manufacturing in our county has suffered, and that we are transitioning to a knowledge-based economy where solid math, language, and problem solving skills, along with secondary and post-secondary degrees become crucial in child's entry into the work force. And one only has to look at High School graduation rates in urban centers in America – less than 50% in 4 years - to know that our country is looking at a serious problem.*

*So our last focus, we think, has to encompass this larger focus that we're calling child well-being. What I mean by this is that we want to look beyond the crisis, and support families after they formally exit our systems so that we can help, to the best of our ability, children succeed and prosper more fully in home, community and school. Our realignment, I believe, allows us for the first time as a county to approach this issue seriously; and a number of our efforts and quality improvement initiatives are being designed specifically to work on this.*

*Again, let me give you one example to show that these aren't just words, but instead reflect a deliberate action plan of this new department. An initiative that is well underway involves a very close partnership we're developing with schools; one that were starting with the City School District. We've taken all of the county contracts that were previously handled through multiple county departments, put them all under one administrator, our School Based Initiatives director, and then worked with the school district to organize and coordinate what we offer. What this looks like in practical terms, is that we're working with the District to help identify students with behavioral issues that are affecting their classroom performance, to organize to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all school based mental health, social service, and family interventions that we fund, to then to coordinate these services in such a way that matches the students with the service that is right for them. Working with the School District, we're trying to put into place a reporting system that tracks the results and the effectiveness of these services on the child's academic performance, so that we know and have confidence that what we're doing is having the impact we want and expect.*

*A lot of this planning took off in the spring, and I'm pleased to say that the new school year started with much of this in place.*

*But this well-being focus can't begin just when the child is in school. So much of the stage for life is set in a child's pre-school years, so that also needs to be our focus. In that vein, we have begun conversations with the United Way's Success by Six coalitions, with Syracuse 20-20, and with the County Health Department's Healthy Families program to identify ways we can work together and to better stay with and support young children who have come into contact with our various service systems.*

*As I said earlier, for very practical reasons, this coordinating work, hard as it is, becomes far more doable as one department speaking for the county, and not four.*

*This developmental work we're doing is at the same time we're responding to the daily pressures of families in crisis who enter our system through one of our divisions. And that pressure, and the current demand for the services we have to offer today, continues to be very high.*

*The number of abuse and neglect reports in Child Welfare, the number of youth arrests in Juvenile Justice, and the number of requests to access community mental health services are all running higher than last year's pace.*

*Mindful that taxpayers themselves are struggling, I think that this realignment positions us better to respond to the demand through the effective use of the currently resources available to us.*

*Our 2015 recommended budget is built with this in mind.*

*The total recommended request for our operating budget is \$78.8 million, representing a slight decrease from our 2014 Budget as Modified. Our local dollar request, of \$21.3 million reflects a \$1.3 million increase in the local appropriation. There are two major reasons for this. One involves New York State charges for State Training schools, the other a reduction in the number of out-of-county youth housed at our Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center.*

*Our combined administrative accounts in Direct Appropriations – everything from Personnel to Supplies to Travel and Training, are down from 2014, from 32.6 million to 31.9 million.*

*Of our three Program accounts, Foster Care is flat, while the account for Juvenile Delinquents and State Training Schools are up.*

## 2015 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

	2014 BAM	2015 REC.	Change	Notes
Administrative Accounts	32.5 m	31.9 m	- .6 m	
Program Accounts	29.1 m	31.5 m	+ 2.4 m	
Foster Care			+ .9 m	
Juvenile Delinquents			+ 1.1 m	
State Training Schools			+ 1.2 m	all local \$
Interdepartmental Appropriations	17.9 m	15.3 m	- 2.6 m	claiming issue
TOTAL	79.5 m	78.8 m	- .7 m	

*The Juvenile Delinquency account reflects a slightly higher caseload projection of 26 children needing residential care, as opposed to a 2014 budgeted figure of 22. Also included is an anticipated slight adjustment in the State determined rates for care.*

*The increase in the State Training Schools account is unrelated to increased demand. This account, as you know, relates to juvenile offenders who are sentenced to State residential facilities by Criminal Court. Counties are responsible for half the costs associated with these placements, and what we budget reflects only our share of the bill. The increase you see in this account does not mean that there are more juvenile offenders being sentenced. Instead, the increase only reflects the State's reconciliation of its own financial accounts, and notification to counties of their share of the bill. This increase you see is large for one simple reason. It's because the State tends to be late on their reconciliation, so when we finally get our estimated number from them, as we did this spring, the jump in costs tends to be significant.*

*The only other expense item that I will mention is something that is budget neutral for this department, but impacts another department – in this case the Probation Department. You'll find this in the Interdepartmental Appropriation line.*

*Our interdepartmental appropriations are down over \$2 million. Similar to the State Training School issue, what you're seeing has nothing to do with local policy or practice, and everything to do with State action. Last year, after our local budget was prepared and delivered to you, we, and every other county, received notification from the State clarifying claiming practices for certain expenses related to Child Preventive funding. For reimbursement reasons, certain costs related to Probation were paid under Child Preventive funding in the former DSS budget. Basically, the new instructions we received from the State said that any that case-related post-adjudication activities could no longer be claimed under this Child Preventive funding stream. This change, which had an impact throughout the state, affects our Probation Department and its revenue projections. It is something that Commissioner Sicherman will be talking with you about in his budget presentation.*

*The last item I'll mention is on the revenue side of the ledger. It concerns the Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center. Besides housing youth from our county, we also accept youth from other, typically smaller counties, that don't operate Detention facilities directly. When this happens, these other counties pay us the entire share of the residential cost for that child. Over the years, this has been relatively stable and predictable. This year has been somewhat of an anomaly. Late last year, Monroe County was forced to close its own county detention center. Because there was going to be a gap between the time they closed and the time they expected to relocate operations at a new site, they needed a place to house their youth. So Monroe reached out to us and other counties for help in temporarily housing these youth in their care. We were in a position to lend assistance, so we did. While our average daily census of local children needing to be detained is still low, we are housing more out of county youth this year, and this has helped this year's financial bottom line. Monroe, as expected, should be up and running in their new facility by January and will no longer need us. Therefore, as the County Executive pointed out in her budget message, the revenue boost we received in 2014 because of Monroe's use of our facility will no longer be available in 2015.*

*In summary, looking at department from a financial viewpoint, I hope you will see a picture of stability and continuity. Our administrative accounts are flat, and we're responding to community demand for our services within existing fiscal boundaries. The largest program account – Foster Care – is also flat. The State Training Schools account has the greatest local dollar increase, but the reason for this concerns the State's reconciliation of its books, and not any change in service demand. The big drop in Interdepartmental Appropriations is likewise related to State action and the changes it made in claiming procedures. This change is cost neutral in this department's budget, but does impact Probation. The most significant revenue change reflects Monroe County detention program, and their expected return to normal operation next year.*

*But this stability belies the fact that we are very much trying to live the promise you expected of us when we realigned. The realignment was all about changing our behavior, with respect to local policy and practice and how we organize and*

delivery our services for the children. I hope that in this presentation, you see that we are talking many steps to better coordinate and integrate resources for children, and in so doing, staying faithful to the expectations that were the basis of last year's decision.

**ONONDAGA COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN  
AND FAMILY SERVICES**

JOANNE M. MAHONEY  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID SUTKOWY  
COMMISSIONER

2015 BUDGET PRESENTATION

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND  
FAMILY SERVICES**

Divisions	Population Served
Child Welfare	Abuse/Neglect
Juvenile Justice	Youth Arrested
Children's Mental Health	Voluntary Mental Health Services
School Based Initiative	Social/Behavioral Supports in School
Youth Bureau	Youth Development

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND  
FAMILY SERVICES**

DEPARTMENT FOCUS

**Level 1: Foundation**

Operational integrity in Divisions

Efficient/Effective Operations

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND  
FAMILY SERVICES**

DEPARTMENT FOCUS

Level 1: Foundation

**Level 2: Cross-System Coordination**

Integration of services/activities across divisions

CW ↔ JJ ↔ MH ↔ SBI ↔ YB

Initiatives

Unifying approach to educational attendance referrals in CW and JJ-PINS

CW-JJ "Cross-Over" youth

Coordination of intensive in-home care

Non-secure detention/use of foster homes

"Seamless funding" across divisions

Integration of residential care placement across CW, JJ, MH

Information to staff on all services, across divisions, available to them



## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

### DEPARTMENT FOCUS

Level 1: Foundation  
**Level 2: Cross-System Coordination**  
 Integration of services/activities across divisions

CW ↔ JJ ↔ MH ↔ SBI ↔ YB

Initiatives

**Unifying approach to educational attendance referrals in CW and JJ-PINS**

CW-JJ "Cross-Over" youth  
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 Non-secure detention/use of foster homes  
 "Seamless funding" across divisions  
 Integration of residential care placement across CW, JJ, MH  
 Information to staff on all services, across divisions, available to them

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

### DEPARTMENT FOCUS

Level 1: Foundation  
 Level 2: Cross-System Coordination  
**Level 3: Child well-being**

Long term success for children in home, community and school

Initiatives

Better integration of community-school efforts  
 Transition of pre-school children exiting systems  
 Transition of school age children exiting systems  
 Better integration between community social and health services

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

### DEPARTMENT FOCUS

Level 1: Foundation  
 Level 2: Cross-System Coordination  
**Level 3: Child well-being**

Long term success for children in home, community and school

Initiatives

**Better integration of community-school efforts**  
 Transition of pre-school children exiting systems  
 Transition of school age children exiting systems  
 Better integration between community social and health services

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

### CURRENT SERVICE ACTIVITY

	2015 (proj)	Change
Child Welfare		
Abuse/Neglect Reports	6,734	+5%
Juvenile Justice		
Youth Arrest Intakes	754	+5%
Children's Mental Health		
ACCESS Intakes	1,206	+42%
Youth Bureau		
Child Development Services	3,780 (mo)	+2%

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES			
2015 RECOMMENDED BUDGET			
	2014	2015	Change
	BAM	REC.	
TOTAL	79.5 m	78.8 m	-.78 m
LOCAL	20.0 m	21.3 m	+1.4 m

*Local Dollars:*

- State Training Schools
- Hillbrook out of county Youth

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES			
2015 RECOMMENDED BUDGET			
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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES				
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TOTAL	79.5 m	78.8 m	-.7 m	

*Revenue:*

- Hillbrook out of county Youth

Mr. May asked Mr. Sutkowy to talk about what the census is compared to capacity at Hillbrook, and are there other counties that Onondaga County can serve. Mr. Sutkowy responded:

- 2013 - 15 kids on average for daily census; 12 in County, 4 out of County
- 2014 - local census down to 9 or 10, out of County close to 11; next year local census will be down, and expect the out of County to remain, so return to 15; program is going to be back to what it was in 2013
- Not expecting huge increase in demand from other counties on detention; whole focus on servicing community and avoiding detention because of costs and transitional issues
- Children detained (short term or long term) have problems reentering the community; deal with issues child facing in community setting as long as no public safety issues
- Well under the capacity

Ms. Rooney responded to Mr. May that the capacity is thirty-two.

Mr. Jordan stated Mr. Sutkowy talked about the need for education for the kids to address juvenile delinquency and other social problems, and Mr. Jordan agrees one thousand percent. Mr. Jordan said they seem to be talking about programmatic approaches, but the larger problem is an attitudinal problem. If families and people in general do not value education or the services provided, then all the money in the world is not going to force a child to learn. It will not make a child engage, if they do not have the desire or willingness to learn. Mr. Jordan asked if they have done anything to attack an attitudinal problem. If society or the family does not value education, then it seems the department is throwing money down the drain. Mr. Jordan asked if Mr. Sutkowy is doing anything to talk to the parents or try to change the perception that education is not all that valuable. Mr. Sutkowy:

- Trying everything; partnerships developing with school districts are great and direction makes sense
- Concerned with urban kids transition to work force without good language, math or problem solving skills
- Last year, asked to collect info on number of individuals receiving public benefits (cash assistance, Medicaid, food stamps) that have college degrees
- 70 - 80% of adults as head of households do not have high school degree; 97 - 99% if adding those with high school degrees; count on hands how many college grads on assistance – degree allowed individual to earn enough

- Education – concentrate on City of Syracuse, but not just city issue - urban American issue; 50% not graduating
- Some issues are academics, behavior and attitude – trying to approach from every angle
- Identify and arrange services that focus on behavior that is causing problems, causing them not to focus, or not benefit from the education
- Work with parents or guardian to reinforce the positive messages of education
- Trying to put together reporting system with district, so performance of the kids receiving services can be tracked; find out if it's making a difference; if it is, great; if it isn't, adjust – want results
- Talked with city in Midwest during conversations with district to see how they did – were reporting good outcomes; model of intervention not dissimilar from County; high school graduation rate at 50%, and in the 80's now
- Better organization of services; identify children needing help quickly in school year; linking them with behavioral support services – makes all the difference

Mr. Jordan asked if the other city or county gave a time period for noticeable results from their efforts. Mr. Sutkowy responded it was Cincinnati, and that question was not asked. The question asked was how long they had been at this, and the answer was ten years. Mr. Sutkowy did not ask when they started seeing results. Mr. Jordan stated there is a significant difference in the budget in juvenile delinquency, and asked if the state training schools are related to the number of children in placement. Mr. Sutkowy answered yes, but it is not through the County's system. State training schools are for children who have committed crimes, and are being sentenced by criminal court to residential placement. The County pays half the cost; what the state bills the County for. The state is really slow in reconciling their accounts (do not reconcile every year), so when the department gets the bill from the state, they pay what they are expected to pay. Mr. Sutkowy said they received the estimated bill in the spring, and this is the County's share of the cost. Mr. Jordan asked if state training schools are education for children sentenced to placement. Mr. Sutkowy responded these are state residential facilities (i.e. Industry in Rochester, Finger Lakes Residential in Tompkins, Goshen downstate and Lincoln Hall). These facilities are for education and treatment, and they are secure facilities. Mr. Sutkowy agreed with Mr. Jordan that the name is deceptive. Mr. Jordan asked Mr. Sutkowy to explain more about the increase in the juvenile delinquency budget. Mr. Sutkowy replied they were overly optimistic with their budgeting. The 2014 budget was built on twenty-two children in residential care. The department finished 2013 with twenty-six, they are currently at twenty-six, and believe it will be twenty-six in 2015. It is an increase in the budget, but it is not an increase in actual practice. Mr. Sutkowy responded to Mr. Jordan that they projected a lower number of kids in the system than what it really was.

Chairman Knapp stated he spoke with a high school principle in his district who could not say enough about the programs the department is bringing out. The principle mentioned Mr. Sutkowy specifically, is really excited about the new structure, and working collaboratively. Chairman Knapp agrees with the importance of education, and that a high school diploma is critical, but asked if they are placing too much emphasis on a college degree (seems to have been a mantra for many years). Try to find a plumber or a carpenter. Chairman Knapp said his nephew is a plumber who could work 24/7, and makes a very nice living do that. By pushing a college degree, it could set some kids up for failure that maybe are not cut out to have a college degree. Higher education includes trades, but is the department losing sight of that. Mr. Sutkowy responded:

- Should invite the department back to discuss with committee; when the dept. was created, they put together presentation for staff of who they are and who they want to be
- A lot of information on this issue; real relationship between educational achievement and earning potential
- Higher in education, better wage scale; does not negate value of trades; completely agree with Chairman Knapp
- College is not the answer for everyone; trades can be - middle ground; manufacturing used to be, but it has fallen
- Service doesn't pay or have the benefits; knowledge based community that does pay, has benefits and stability
- Those jobs and trades require problem solving skills; can't transition kids to those jobs without solid foundation
- School districts have lots of pressure for basic academics; behavior kids are presenting in schools are serious stuff
- Lot going on through County that department can help organize and work w/school district; school can focus on academics; department can focus on behavior and working with families; partnership they hope will produce results

**Chairman Knapp requested a list of their contracts.** Mr. Sutkowy agreed. Chairman Knapp asked if they are moving any positions after the big change last year. Mr. Sutkowy responded there are couple changes in the margins. The department operates a day treatment clinic (combination school and mental health clinic), and an outpatient mental health clinic. They each have a Typist, and what Mr. Sutkowy would like to do is abolish one and create an office manager for both. The office manager will focus on the basic stuff of running an office, and let the clinical directors focus on what they are good at. Mr. Sutkowy stated they are moving two positions. Hillbrook has a custodial position that they would like to move to Facilities. The custodial person is

good, but when he's not there, the place suffers. It would be a better relationship, and better service, if the function is moved to facilities, and their infrastructure. Mr. Morgan commented they are proposing the abolishment of Maintenance Worker 2 in the Department of Children and Family Services, and the creation of it in Facilities Management. This is keeping in line with moves made the last few years with centralizing infrastructure (maintenance positions to Facilities); abolish and create. Mr. Morgan stated that Mr. Sutkowy is asking to create and fund an Administrative Assistant, and abolish a Typist 2. **Chairman Knapp asked what the increase in other miscellaneous revenues of \$1.539 million are in the grants budget (590057).** Mr. Morgan said they will get back to the Chairman. Chairman Knapp asked about the federal aid health (590013) decrease of \$1,450,442. Mr. Morgan replied that it is Oncare. The Oncare grant the County received almost six years ago is a federal grant that the Mental Health Department received. It is now in this department, because it was for children with severe mental health issues. That grant is sunsetting, which means the Legislature will start seeing the decrease, and eventually there will not be a number there for that grant.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE M. MCNAMARA, Assistant Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

## ATTENDANCE

### COMMITTEE: W&M REVIEW OF HEALTH DEPTS A.M.

DATE: 9/17/14

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Chadwick	DSS ES
Regina Maloney	DSS ES
Rick Fursal	DSS ES
Colleen Gurnig	DSS-ES
Beth Martas	Personnel
Lisa Alford	ALTC
Katie Backus	ALTC
Bamy Beck	"
Mat Reosa	"
Tiffany Barrett	"
Mike Torrick	DSS-ES
Chris Flynn	DCFS
Jenn Palmalio	DCFS