



Onondaga County Legislature

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE 2016 TENTATIVE BUDGET HEALTH DEPARTMENTS A.M. – SEPTEMBER 17, 2015 DAVID H. KNAPP, CHAIRMAN

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Holmquist

ALSO PRESENT: Chairman McMahon, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Liedka, Dr. Chase and see attached

Chairman Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.

Social Services – Department of Economic Security: Sarah Merrick, Commissioner (4-82)

Ms. Merrick presented the following:



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

PROPOSED 2016 ONONDAGA COUNTY BUDGET DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY PREPARED STATEMENT FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, Chairman Knapp and fellow Ways and Means members. Thank you for the opportunity to present the 2016 County Executive's Department of Social Services – Economic Security's proposed budget. Like last year, 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, key accomplishments, and an overview of program activities. Finally, I will highlight goals for 2016.

RE-ORGANIZATION

As stated last year, the human services re-organization has allowed DSS-ES to have a singular focus on providing public benefits to community members in need in the most effective and efficient manner through professional excellence and quality customer service.

Strategic Direction

It was extremely important for all employees to understand why the department exists and the direction we were moving in. Therefore, over the last twelve months, there has been an extensive strategic focusing effort. There are now clearly defined (please see the power point slides for details):

- Mission and Vision
- Departmental Values
- Core Skills

- *Outcomes and Measures*

Management Development

Once clarity of purpose was defined, the Department launched a six-month leadership enhancement training program. Approximately 60 DSS-ES employees in a supervisory role participated. The main focus of the training was to bring about a culture change and create awareness, help develop/strengthen a leadership mindset and start to develop/strengthen leadership skills. Training was in the following areas:

- *policy & procedures*
- *coaching and conflict resolution*
- *performance based supervision*

Ongoing management development is being conducted on a quarterly basis.

Customer Service Focus & Training

The efficacy of DSS-ES will be determined, in large measure, on the extent to which it cultivates, manages and sustains positive engagements with our customers and community partners. In May, a year-long training effort was launched to build the capacity of all department employees to provide excellent customer service. The training is designed to:

- *Address relevant customer service concerns of day to day operations, and challenges for customer-facing employees.*
- *Establish a cultural and organizational focus that strives for excellence in program administration and public service.*

The program topics include:

- **Program #1: Understanding YOU – Understanding the Clients (Internal & External)**
- **Program #2: How We All Communicate**
- **Program #3: Professional Communication Skills**
- **Program #4: Creating Professional Agreements**

The Department will launch a visitor satisfaction survey that will be given to clients via in-person, by website or mail. This will be used as a measurement tool for how well training has improved our customer service.

As a positive note, the Department has received several thank you notes on our service approach.

Program Improvements

Self-Service Kiosks

In March, eight state of the art self-service kiosks were installed in the second floor reception area, to provide more efficient client service and to make it easier for clients to submit required paperwork.

Clients are able to:

- *Drop off documents and obtain a printed receipt*
- *Access NYS myBenefits website*
- *Print out a TA / SNAP budget*
- *Convert the screen to Spanish language*

From March 23rd to September 11th, over 25,000 individuals have used the machines, with a daily average of 218 users.

Channel 3 news ran a news story on the kiosks and featured a very happy client and here's what she had to say..."It's a lot faster and we don't have to wait for a long time. It saves time for us. In the past we had to wait an hour and a half, we had to wait and wait and wait." Literally, clients can be in and out of the Civic Center in minutes.

I would like to especially thank the County Executive for her support of this innovative idea and the exceptional work of the Department's Systems' staff in making this possible.

Homeless Housing Unit

As a result of our county's increased number of the most vulnerable population, the homeless, DSS-ES Emergency Homeless Housing Unit has been redesigned. One of the primary goals of the Housing Unit is to provide a more collaborative partnership with our local Emergency Shelter Programs by better assisting clients temporarily residing in homeless shelters.

Our focus is assisting clients:

- *in navigating the application process*
- *obtaining affordable, permanent housing*

- *in providing an avenue for employment or Social Security benefits*

With the change in focus, average length of stays in shelters has started to decrease. The process will continue to be adjusted with the continued goal of reducing homeless recidivism and extended lengths of shelter stays.

PROGRAMS

Public benefits range from temporary assistance (cash), SNAP (food stamps), energy assistance (HEAP), day care subsidies, child support and medical insurance (Medicaid). Before the December 2007 great recession, the numbers of households seeking assistance were at record lows. Even with the steady improvement of our local economy, our program recipient numbers remain at high levels. These benefits help over 31% of our county residents. The vast majority of these individuals are employed or underemployed.

As you can see in the following graphs in the Power Point presentation.

Based on client demand, there are no significant changes in the 2016 County Executive's proposed budget in the program allocations areas.

Focus on Temporary Assistance (Cash) Households (10% of all recipients)

As of July, there are 6,464 households receiving temporary assistance (cash benefit) or what the public traditionally thinks of as welfare. Of these cases, 36% are deemed able to work; this is a 3% decline from last year. At this time, I want to recognize our twenty year partnership with JobsPlus! Through their hard work, those employable are getting jobs. In 2012, 2,560 people entered employment; in 2013, 2,689 individuals; in 2014 2,470 and as of July 2015, 1,477 people.

While it is our desire to have all clients work, there are those still unable to work due to physical &/or mental health limitations. Staff indicates many of these individuals who exhibit these limitations are requiring more intensive case management. As many of these cases as possible are turned over to our Social Security Transitions Unit, to work on getting SSI/SSD benefits. This raises the monthly cash benefit they receive and enables their temporary assistance cases to be closed.

SSI Awards		
Years	Cases	Local Savings based on one year of benefits
FY 2013	197	\$576, 739
FY 2014	279	\$850, 253
2015 (as of July)	184	\$508, 052

Child only cases represent over 22% of our open temporary assistance cases. These clients either have parents on SSI or the child is in the care of a relative /family friends, grandparent/aunt/cousin. In some of these cases, residing with their relative is an alternative to foster care and allows the family to stay in tack.

Indigent burial are also part of the Safety Net account. Due to the adjusted rates structure in 2015 and the increase in cases, there is a proposed \$800,000 increase in this account. A portion of this increase is to cover the cost of burial supplementation (\$270,000) included in the indigent burial legislation.

Federal and State Impacts

Child Care

Last year, the Federal Child Care and Development Act of 2014 was passed. Based on this, NYS is in the process of developing new regulations that will begin in October 2015. Some of the upcoming changes include:

- *Criminal background checks for all providers*
- *Changing the eligibility redetermination from 6 months to 12 months*

The department will monitor the financial impact of these changes and whether it will affect the availability of subsidized child care in our community.

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

Effective January 2016, the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) waiver for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) will end. This means over 6,000 single individuals who receive SNAP will need to be assisted in finding employment as well as tracked to verify employment. If employment is not secured, their cases will be closed.

In April 2012, the NYS Legislature passed a law mandating the State takeover of the administrative function of Medicaid program. At that time, the Legislature set a goal that all administrative responsibilities would be transferred by March 31, 2018.

*As of this date, the NYS takeover of the administration of Medicaid continues to be delayed, partly due to expanding access to Medicaid and the technology infrastructure needed to be built. It is important to note that **31,857** additional county residents (a total of 101,307 residents) have some form of health insurance due to the Federal Affordability Healthcare Act. For 2016, NYS has indicated that sometime during the year, they will begin phasing in an additional portion of our caseload. Based on information known at this time, the County will continue to handle renewals and maintenance for a significant portion of the Medicaid population for the near future.*

GOALS FOR 2016

- *Continued focus on customer service improvements*
 - *Fully use the self-service kiosks*
 - *Temporary Assistance Check-In for established appointments*
 - *Waiting Rooms Check In & Tracking (DMV style)*
 - *Second Floor Reception Area oversight*
 - *Implement quality assurance process for all call centers and reduce call waiting times*
 - *Complete all staff trainings*
- *Continued focus on special populations: homeless, clients with short term situations causing them to be unable to work and chronic care*
- *Continue to transition Medicaid cases to New York State*
- *Continued focus on expanding management and leadership skills*
 - *Begin LEAN projects in key operational lines to find efficiencies*

This 2016 Executive Budget focuses on maximizing efficiency and improving customer service by investments in staff, technology and training.

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.



DSS – ES 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.
- The delivery of services will be conducted in a safe and supportive environment for members of our staff and the public.
- Our goal is to help people achieve their highest level of independence by providing quality service in a timely, efficient and dignified manner.

DSS-ES Vision

- The Department will be represented by trained, respectful and proficient staff that will:
- Take a holistic approach while providing services in a safe environment for both employees and individuals we serve.
- Function as facilitators and/or problem solvers taking personal accountability to be responsive.
- Provide clear and consistent information.
- Address a range of customer needs while treating the individuals we serve as equals.
- Be sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences of the public we serve including but not limited to ethnicity, age, gender, disability, literacy and mental health limitations, and/or citizen status.

DSS-ES Values

Confidentiality	Staff is dedicated to maintain and sustain confidentiality in order to protect all personal information.
Team Work	Maximum results are achieved by a community of partners working together.
Quality Service	Deliver services in a professional, knowledgeable, respectful and inclusive manner.
Commitment and Accountability	Be accurate, productive, efficient, committed to public service, and invested in one's job. Be open-minded, dedicated and cooperative.
Communication	Communicate information appropriately, clearly, concisely, and consistently.

DSS-ES Core Skills

Work Performance	Public Service	Intra and Interagency Partnerships	Technology	Leadership Qualities	Management Skills
Find Innovative and creative solutions	Exemplary Customer Service	Collaboration	Use innovative and effective ways to access, retrieve, maintain, and store information.	Ability to inspire, motivate and energize	Ability to delegate
Ability to Organize	Cultural Competency	Coordination		Responsibility	Inspire and motivate
Program Knowledge	Adaptability	Communication		Ability to communicate effectively	Mentoring
Critical Thinking	Reliability	Consistent Information		Competence	Training
Personal Responsibility				Flexibility	Coaching
Take the Initiative				Confidence	Ability to evaluate
Decisiveness					Succession planning

Management Development

- Six month training launched. Topics included:
 - Policy & Procedures
 - Coaching & Conflict Resolution
 - Performance Based Supervision

Customer Service Focus

- Implemented outcome based Customer Service training for all employees providing tools that will:
 - Provide tools for effectively interacting with clients
 - Establish a cultural shift towards excellent customer service
- Launched a Satisfaction Survey that will allow DSS-ES to continue to discover “weak links” and implement process improvement(s)

Program Improvements



Self Service Kiosks

AS OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2015 over 25,000 INDIVIDUALS HAVE USED THE SELF-SERVICE KIOSKS, A DAILY AVERAGE 218 USERS

The eight self-service kiosks were installed in March allowing clients to:

- Submit required documents and obtain a printed receipt without having to wait in long lines
- Access NYS my Benefits website
- Print out a TA/SNAP budget
- Convert the screen to Spanish

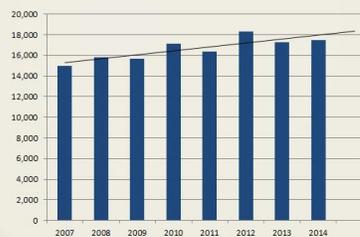
Channel 3 news ran a story and a client had to say this "It's a lot faster and we don't have to wait for a long time. It saves time for us. In the past we had to wait an hour and a half, we had to wait and wait and wait."

Homeless Housing Unit

- DSS-ES Emergency Homeless Housing Unit has been redesigned
- Collaborative partnerships with local Emergency Shelter Programs to better assist clients with the TA process
- DSS-ES providing more support and oversight to the agencies serving the homeless to achieve the end goal of permanent housing AND decreasing shelter stays

Temporary Assistance – Applications Filed

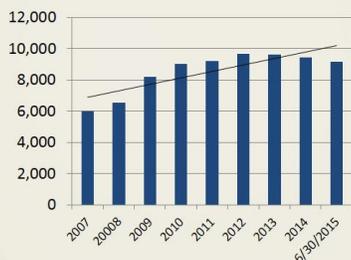
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	06/30/2015
Temporary Assistance - Applications Filed	14,988	15,823	15,654	17,129	16,406	18,318	17,279	17,473	8,141



■ 17% Increase 2007 vs. 2014

Temporary Assistance - Family Assistance Open Cases

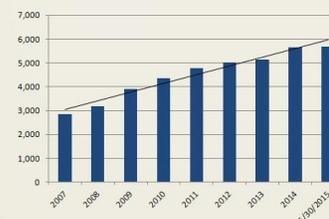
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	06/30/2015
Family Assistance - Individuals	5,979	6,557	8,197	9,024	9,197	9,663	9,639	9,440	9,179



■ 58% Increase 2007 vs. 2014

Temporary Assistance - Safety Net Open Cases (Single Individuals)

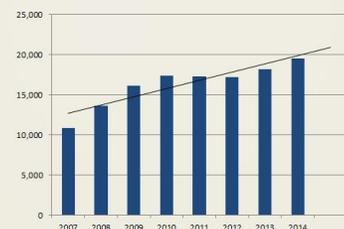
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	06/30/2015
Safety Net - Individuals	2,859	3,177	3,919	4,367	4,788	5,021	5,142	5,644	5,680



■ 97% Increase 2007 vs. 2014

SNAP(Food Stamps) Applications Filed

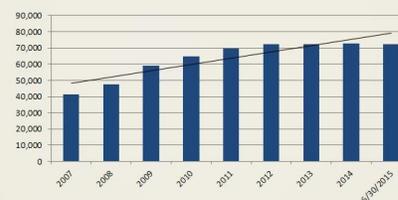
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
SNAP - Applications Filed	10,878	13,628	16,137	17,402	17,315	17,239	18,188	19,560	10,650



■ 80% Increase 2007 vs. 2014

SNAP (Food Stamps) Open Cases

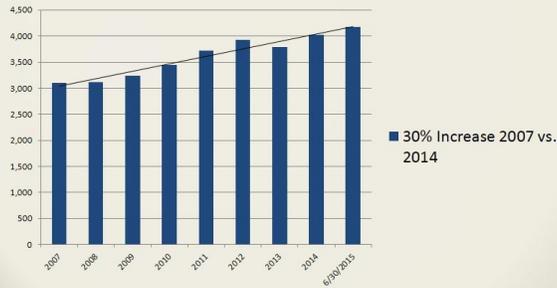
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
SNAP - Individuals	41,559	47,480	58,950	64,890	69,628	72,166	72,452	72,860	72,433



■ 75% Increase 2007 vs. 2014

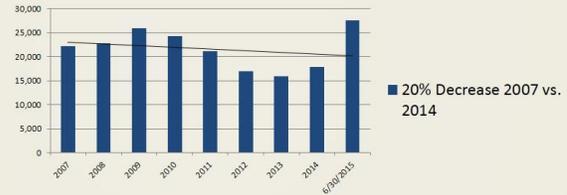
Subsidized Child Care Open Cases

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
Child Care- Average Monthly Cases	3,100	3,116	3,245	3,443	3,721	3,927	3,785	4,017	4,174



Heating Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Open Cases

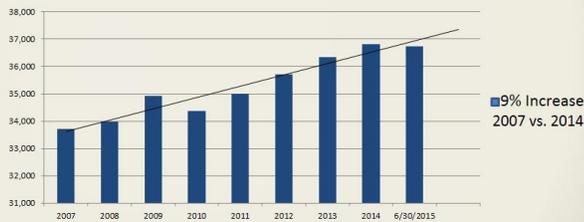
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
HEAP - Individuals	22,173	22,855	25,999	24,227	21,079	16,928	15,895	17,790	27,540



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

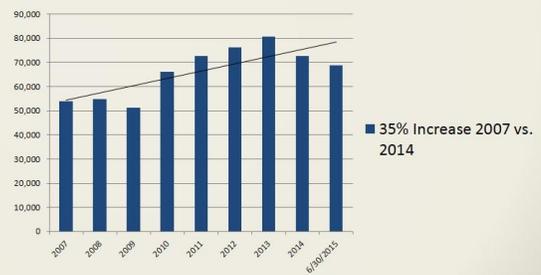
Child Support Open Cases & Annual Collections

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
Number of Households (Cases)	33,710	33,977	34,912	34,363	35,008	35,703	36,341	36,826	36,744
Total Collections	\$45,287,633	\$48,138,665	\$47,459,836	\$47,198,279	\$47,487,866	\$47,509,412	\$46,453,198	\$45,453,198	\$27,809,002



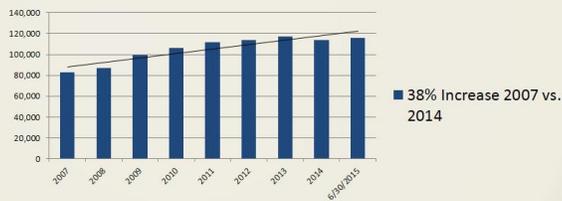
Medicaid Open Cases

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
Medicaid - Individuals	53,998	54,779	51,254	66,150	72,687	76,195	80,716	72,700	54,815



Total Individuals Unduplicated Count

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	6/30/2015
DSS - ES Clients	82,798	86,664	99,205	106,331	111,409	113,872	117,029	114,089	116,141



Note: Additional 27, 106 Child Support Cases=143, 247 total(excludes TA & MA cases)

Social Security Transition

Years	Cases	Local Savings based on one year of benefits
FY 2013	197	\$576, 739
FY 2014	279	\$850, 253
2015 (as of July)	184	\$508, 052

- Social Security Transition:
 - Raises the monthly cash benefit clients receive
 - Enables DSS-ES to close temporary assistance cases

2016 Goals

- Continued focus on customer service improvements
 - Fully use the self-service kiosks
 - Temporary Assistance Check-In for established appointments
 - Waiting Rooms Check In & Tracking (DMV style)
 - Second Floor Reception Area oversight
 - Implement quality assurance process for all call centers and address call waiting lengths
 - Complete all staff trainings
- Continued focus on special populations: homeless, clients with short term situations causing them to be unable to work and Chronic Care
- Continue to transition Medicaid to New York State
- Continued focus on expanding management and leadership skills
 - Begin LEAN projects in key operational lines to find efficiencies

Mr. May

- From a business standpoint what are your goals in improving customer service, are the shortened wait times translating to a lower costs of delivering the services that you provide

Ms. Merrick responded: yes, customer service can be summarized:

- Work with individuals in a respectful manor that will help in ending the contention when people come in for benefits. They are coming in in crisis and the negative stuff feeds into the staff and that's where customer service training starts
- Teach staff how to calm people down, done with customer service training on how to listen
- With customer service training, make the first interaction accomplish getting people what they need and to understanding the process, which will eliminate the individual having to come back 3 or 4 times
- Improve communication skills to explain to someone what they need to do to receive a benefit or continue benefits
- In the long term, will cut down on the number of interactions, which will build efficiencies so we will be able to maintain or do more with current staffing

Mr. May suggested that in the future they provide what their business objective is, what their cost of doing business is and how it is measured from a business aspect, it's very expensive what you do.

Mr. May:

- Regarding the self-service kiosk, was there a cost benefit analysis done as to whether or not to do this
- If there was, how are you doing against those matrices so far

Ms. Merrick:

- Prior to implementing the kiosk there was pressure to grow the clerical staff by 5 or 6 individuals, a large cost and an ongoing cost
- Technology and an investment of approximately \$120,000; ½ of the cost in the hardware and ½ of it in the programing, no longer hearing we need additional clerical staff
- Having the one person helping clients has alleviated that pressure.
- Saved in staffing

Ms. Merrick indicated that they would run the numbers and give a more technical answer.

Mr. May asked in the future, please include some of those measurements. Ms. Merrick said they would be happy to do that.

Mrs. Ervin:

- Thanked Ms. Merrick for doing a great job and that the kiosk has made a big difference
- Indicated that she goes through every now then and doesn't notice as much contention
- Although there is still some contention

- There are some caseworkers that don't smile, don't treat folk's right, so the training still needs to keep going
 - The numbers are increasing greatly and realizes that the staff is overloaded, but they still have to treat folks like folks
 - Still disgusted by some of the things going on
- Ms. Merrick responded; will do, in 100% agreement.

Chairman McMahon:

- Thanked Ms. Merrick for a great presentation
- From the policy side, it's clear that in our community and our city center has a serious pan handling problem
- These folks and/or the homeless are our clients or need to be our clients and aren't
- Clear that city government has turned a blind eye to this problem
- Many complaints along with own experiences as to why this has such a negative impact
- From a mother going downtown with her 3 kids and being chased down for a dollar, to meeting with an executive to create jobs and the first thing they see walking out of Starbucks is four or five people panhandling him in the morning
- This has a real impact on the community let alone the human side of it
- Need to try and get these folks the services that they need so they can try and live with some dignity
- Sick of waiting for the city, can pass a countywide law or ordinance that the city can adopt if they choose or not
- Shows constituents that we are doing something
- In discussing this policy; who should be at the table, who should be there talking about the service side of things, and what organization should be there to work on this in collaborate fashion; McMahon is hoping that Ms. Merrick can help with that piece of it.

Chairman McMahon continued:

- Indigent burial program, working with my colleague Dave Knapp and our Majority Leader Pat Kilmartin, have a one year contract that had some unintended consequences as far as the cost side
- In order to make an informed decision on whether to renew the contract, would like to know where the cost increases are coming from
- Thought with supplementation that wouldn't happen
- Need to see the data to prove what happened
- Don't have to wait until next year to solve it
- If there are unintended consequences, or if individuals are gaming the system that can be changed this year and stop the bleeding
- Out of the safety net part increase in your budget line of \$800,000 is due to indigent burials and shelters costs
- Please break out numbers; how much is for indigent burials and how much is for shelter costs

Ms. Merrick responded, will get better and more precise numbers:

- The total cost is based on the rates that were passed in last year's legislation is estimated for a full year of indigent burials, will be around \$970,000
- Models show if you take supplementation off the table; keep the rate increase there could be a \$270,000 savings
- Have the numbers and will provide them

Chairman McMahon indicated that permission isn't needed to pass a law, need to see the data to understand that what was advocated for isn't working the way it was expected to

Chairman McMahon, asked out of the \$800,000 safety net how much of that is for indigent burials?

Ms. Merrick:

- \$400,000.

Chairman Knapp then asked Mr. Morgan if he had anything to add

Mr. Morgan: Agreed, in the \$300,000/\$400,000 range.

- Shelters are up another \$300,000
- Additional costs for transporting people so Centro is up another \$130,000 or so

Chairman McMahon:

- What exactly are you talking about when you say shelters, is that us subcontracting

Ms. Merrick:

- No, safety net population aren't the single individuals and more individuals are becoming eligible to receive the cash benefit
- Many of the individuals end up in our shelters
- Shelters are paid by an open case

Chairman McMahon responded, shelters being places like the Salvation Army

Ms. Merrick:

- Yes; Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and the Rescue Mission have contract with the county

Mr. Kilmartin:

- Thanked Ms. Merrick for the presentation, very good with the details provided, education on the specifics of the program
- Regarding indigent burials; would your department work with Steve to give an apples to apples comparison of the program last year, the program this year, any changes, and the costs associated with the different line items

Ms. Merrick responded, we have that

Mr. Kilmartin asked about the touch screens:

- Any other departments look into using the touch screens for different services
 - Sheriff's Office for pistol permits
 - Clerk's Office for filing or retrieving documents
 - Any other paper driven processes in the county

Ms. Merrick deferred to Mr. Morgan

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes, always looking at that although some process need human interaction like pistol permits
- Works in Social Service because they are merely dropping off documents
- An efficient way to gather data without taking up the staffs' time
- The Clerk's office has invested in more online; allowing people to access information and documents

Mr. Kilmartin said that it would be interesting to see what other departments have a paper pick or drop off

- Fill out the form and drop it off
- May be helpful for other departments

Chairman Knapp gave an example of the finance department where people could drop of tax payments

Ms. Merrick invited the legislature to come up and see the kiosk and its backside

Mr. Kilmartin:

- Great deal in Media regarding the poverty rates in Onondaga County
- What are the trends in the past years and going forward
- Impact on the Social Services department or county services

Ms. Merrick:

- The graphs show the trends, the great depression took the legs out of a large portion of our residents and that's who's being served
- Social Services gives a little support to help manage living in poverty
- The benefits don't help them out of poverty
- As the individuals work with JobsPLUS, getting that first job, and with experience get a raise, they slowly get out of poverty
- Statistics show the need for services aren't declining anytime soon
- Many singles have some limitations or disability aren't going to be able to be employed will need assistance
- Social Services' job is to help people get through the day a little better

Chairman McMahon:

- Out of the population that we are serving what percentage of people are from the refugee community
- The refugee communities have a history of coming in, utilizing service, then eventually working their way off of services

Ms. Merrick:

- An average year 1200-1400 refugees
- By Federal Government they are eligible for public benefits for a short period of time, the Federal Government picks up 100% of those costs
- Approximately 70% come in with employment skills and move off public assistance relatively quickly

Chairman McMahon:

- The numbers shown (which number is skewed) are looking at communities like Detroit
- They are measuring Detroit by their county, our number is being measured off of 100,000 people when it should be measuring it by ½ million people, which is the size of our county
- Out of that number, how much of that is a moving target with the refugees coming in and coming off

Ms. Merrick:

- Don't have an answer, will reach out to the people in the refugee community that might be able to get that data
- Two refugee resettlement communities; Catholic Charities and InterFaith Works

Mr. Kilmartin:

- It would be interesting to see if the trend of poverty in Syracuse and Onondaga County has spiked in the recent years or been a steady consistent climb, consistent with other cities and counties
- Is there something unusual going on in Syracuse or Onondaga County in the past 5, 10, 20 years that's different than other cities and counties, which needs to be addressed
- Whether there are idiosyncrasies in the city or county that needs to be investigated
- Anything in the review of data or information

Ms. Merrick:

- No, meets with colleges across the state on a regular basis and all saying the same thing
- Seeing a growth in caseload
- Larger percentage of population served not able to work
- Increase in homeless
- Compared very closely to Rochester and Buffalo, will look into the data and will get back to you

Mr. Jordan:

- What exactly is being done to safe guard financial information given to us by applicants
- What does your department do to insure confidentiality
- Does Social Services have a close drawer policy, where everything has to be put away in drawers

Ms. Merrick:

- As much as possible, everything is done electronically
- Use State systems: have users ids and passwords issued by the State
- Strict confidentiality policy that every employee must read and sign
- Constant training on the rights of the client and our job not to breach confidentiality
- Approximately 20/30 data bases that can be accessed; IRS information, bank accounts
- Takes confidentiality seriously, random data base checks are done to make sure no one is breaching clients' confidentiality.

Mr. Jordan asked if there was a closed drawer policy where people don't leave papers on their desks at night

Ms. Merrick:

- Pretty much so
- Don't use laptops, have office computers, do their work in their offices

Mr. Jordan:

- What about cleaning staff, or someone doing repairs in the department
- The concern is, there is information subject to being reviewed by people that shouldn't have access to it

Ms. Merrick responded that over the last 5, 10 years implemented:

- Scanning of documents, elevates paper case records laying around
- Don't find breaches of people walking around and going through actual hard copies
- Breaches are found more when there is a famous person in the newspaper, then people are accessing that information

Mr. Jordan encourages them to be aware of that risk and to take appropriate actions. Ms. Merrick responded absolutely.

Mr. Jordan asked to elaborate on the reasons for the line item increases in Contractual Expenses, Daycare Expenses, Professional Services, and the Other Expenses line item

Ms. Merrick:

- Largest increases is in caseloads, burial, and transportation
- Supplies and materials increased in hope to purchase additional kiosks
- Bring the self-serve idea to other locations to make things easier for people to work with Social Services
- Contractual Expenses, Non-Governmental, is for additional resources for JobsPLUS.
- ABAWD, works with 6,000 clients in JobsPlus and that's going to double
- Need additional staff to meet this Federal mandate, requiring to assist in finding employment to anyone interested
- Emergency Assistance to Adults, seeing individuals on Social Security income needing some onetime payment; a rent payment, or needing something so they can stay housed, or get them out of some type of immediate crisis.
- Daycare, more people are eligible for low income subsidized daycare, this is a good thing it means that they are working
- The big jump is in Professional Services is a onetime technology upgrade for the self-serve kiosk machines, being able to use it to its fullest and developing a DMV type of check-in system

Ms. Merrick responded to Mr. Jordan's question regarding increase of funding for 2 positions

- Caseloads are not going down
- One position is adding an IM worker to help with ABAWD's change (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents) adults who are receiving SNAP or food stamp benefits
- Federal Government for approximately 10 years said that you don't have to work to receive these benefits, now you have to work to receive these benefits
- Very labor intensive and that's why additional staff is needed
- Would like to move towards being the most efficient department as possible and get into lean management, would like to add and quality assurance position

Mr. Jordan:

- Clarification; it was said that the State is taking over Medicaid, are going to take over the administration of Medicaid
- Administration will now be handled at the State level

Ms. Merrick:

- Correct
- Don't know when
- County still has 2/3 of the Medicaid cases and the State has 1/3

Chairman McMahan:

- Contractual services increase of \$380,000 is all going to JobsPLUS for them to hire people

Ms. Merrick:

- Let me be very specific, JobsPLUS is \$200,000
- New Training for Trades \$100,000

Mr. Morgan added, \$100,000 is for forensic accounting for chronic care cases

Chairman McMahan:

- These would be JobsPLUS employees

Ms. Merrick:

- Yes, through OCC

Chairman McMahon:

- Would love to understand JobsPLUS, is it that OCC won a federal grant to work with JobsPlus,
- Is this a piece of that or is this just the JobsPLUS piece of this

Mr. Morgan:

- No, let me give you some history
- JobsPLUS was created when welfare reform was created in the mid 90's at the federal level
- If you were able to work at the time you came in for benefits, you immediately had to look for work
- Instead of wrapping up county staff, would contract it out completely
- The partnership with OCC was born
- Other counties across the state don't have that type relationship with a community college
- The work done on the employment end, it has to be done county personnel

Chairman McMahon responded that he didn't think that JobsPLUS was part of the Community College

Mr. Morgan:

- It's part of the community college
- They are employees of OCC

Chairman McMahon:

- They have a Board, that at least one of our legislators is on
- They have an Executive Director
- Who's hiring these people

Mr. Morgan and Ms. Merrick both responded OCC

Mr. Morgan: They are a branch of OCC, they are OCC employees

Chairman McMahon:

- If I called Casey Crabill and asked if she was hiring 2 or 3 new JobsPlus people, would she say yes or would she say that the JobsPLUS Director is hiring them

Mr. Morgan:

- She would say that the Community College was
- The Director of JobsPLUS is meeting with them, probably not the President, but someone under her

Chairman McMahon:

- Please supply background; everything on JobsPLUS, everything on the relationship with OCC, who's making decisions
- I've dealt with this and had questions, got a different answers than he did from Mr. Morgan

Mr. Morgan:

- Who are you getting answers from

Chairman McMahon, Casey Crabill specifically told me that she doesn't hire people for JobsPLUS

Mr. Morgan, they are OCC employees, someone is hiring them

Chairman McMahon stated that he wants to understand what they approving and Chairman Knapp recommended a tree diagram

Mr. Jordan:

- The increase in indigent burials, which is largely or entirely as a result of supplementation
- Was under the understanding that supplementation is, a family members can supplement the services at their cost
- Why would that result in an increase cost to the county if we are just allowing the family to supplement

Ms. Merrick gave an example:

- Without supplementation a family comes in with \$10; the county says they have the ability to pay for the burial so they would be eligible
- With supplementation the family comes in with \$10, the county will give them \$10 and match it up to the cap (top rate established for an indigent burial)
- Prior to supplementation, families weren't allowed to bring additional money to the burial, if they had money to bury their loved one they would have to pay for it
- With supplementation, they have money and we'll give them money also to spend on the burial
- Supplementation is making more people eligible for an indigent burial, before that \$10 would make them ineligible for the burial

Mr. Jordan asked what qualifies someone for an indigent burial

Ms. Merrick:

- If it's a single individual, look at that individual's (decedent) assets
- If it's a husband and wife, look at the household assets
- Certain family members are responsible for a burial, which for the most part it's the spouse
- If the eligibility rate was \$1,500 an individual had \$1,401 in resources that individual would be eligible for an indigent burial
- If the household's assets were \$1,501 that individual wouldn't be eligible
- As the rate is raised to \$3,000, more people with cash or assets below that rate are now eligible for the benefits.

Mr. Morgan:

- Bottom line, an individual comes in for an indigent burial; that individual is eligible, then another family member, not the decedent or spouse, wants to bring money to the table for a more expensive casket or flowers; before supplementation the county wouldn't allow that because they have the resources to bury the loved one, now with supplementation, the county is paying for the burial and the family is paying for the extras
- Since the new legislation went into effect more people are eligible, the number of burials has doubled

Chairman McMahon:

- This is more a menu of services
- County pays X then allows family to add one or two things
- Finance said that it wasn't going to impact the numbers, which is why we would like the numbers.

Mr. Jordan stated that it's not so much that the rates went up, it's more that the number of people utilizing it went up.

Mr. Morgan and Ms. Merrick both responded that's right. Mr. Morgan continued that the rates are part of it, the majority of it is the rate increase has allowed more people to come in door and be eligible, when before they weren't.

Mr. Kilmartin asked if there were two issues impacting the county financially:

1 the rate increase expanded the number of people eligible for the program

2 now the county's not knocking people out of eligibility because family members have resources; where in the past, we might say to family members that the decedent is indigent, you have the resources and based on that, the decedent is ineligible.

Mr. Morgan said that he didn't think the second thing is a change, they have always looked into other resources

Chairman Knapp:

- The two things that are effecting it
 - The higher rates the County is paying to the funeral homes
 - Due to the fact that more people are eligible and utilizing the program, so the number of cases are up and the amount being reimbursed is up, and that is the snowball effect

Ms. Merrick:

- You are right David
- 50% of the increase cost is the increase in rates
- Other 50% is allowing for supplementation

Mr. Morgan gave an example that February to July 2014 there was 153 approved burials and February to July 2015 there were 250, 97 more approved since legislation went into place

Chairman McMahon stated that when the law was passed last year, he knew that it would cost more money because the rate was increased. There are a couple of funeral homes that have had 300-400% increase in rates, they are marketing this as and sales tool.

Mr. Morgan added that \$200,000 was added for the rates and it seems to be in line with what he was seeing on the rates side

Chairman Knapp asked Mr. Morgan if this is an OnWard like program, but not part of the OnWard program

Mr. Morgan:

- In the social service field these concepts aren't new to them
- When a department or program has already gone down that road it looked at to evaluate it within the context of the program trying to be rolled out
- This is an advantage, they are already proceeding with performance management and learn from those things as seen with Children and Family Service within the Juvenile Justice Program

Chairman Knapp asked what overtime is used for, it's up a bit

Ms. Merrick:

- It is used for summer vacations, many long term employees' which leaves a skeleton staff July and August
- Push overtime in September and October to catch up and meet deadlines

Chairman Knapp asked, does the County have language people on staff due to the large refugee population

Ms. Merrick:

- This is something they are trying to figure out and how to adapt to
- Use Language Line, which is a national service
- Collecting data to see what the top ten languages are, then do own conversion of some of the basic instructions

Chairman Knapp

- Please provide breakdown of the All Other Expenses line, which is consistently increasing
- The 103 line is going down, is that a part of what was discussed prior with the part-time workers

Ms. Merrick:

- The 101 account has flat lined
- Some of this is due to the reorganization, money was moved to another department
- Downsizing and cutting the 103 account; currently has 8 or 9 staff members on the 103 account, trying to phase that down as much as possible

Chairman Knapp, please provide a list of contracts and what the yearend projections are

Mr. Morgan:

- The large Medicaid account is going to drive a surplus this year; the benefit from the affordable care act was larger than anticipated, that's why there is a large decrease going into next year
- The only account that may have a problem is the safety net account, because of what occurring with shelters and burials

Chairman Knapp, Professional Services has a pretty good increase

Ms. Merrick:

- Increase is due to:
 - Contract with Ventech for the DMV concept
 - Contract with Bonadio, an accounting firm; help with older cases, chronic care cases, and to help to get them reviewed and finalized
 - A small contract to hopefully hire a nurse to work with the limitedly disabled; going to doctor appointments, help determine if they are truly disabled, if so track them to SSI, if not get them in the workforce

Chairman. Knapp, the State Medicaid takeover in 2015 unfunded 8 positions; can those now be abolished or do they need to remain unfunded for 2016

Mr. Morgan:

- They are common titles, maintenance worker, specialist, and supervisor
- Can be used in other areas of the operation
- Keep the position, the funding was taken away, and are vacant unfunded positions

Chairman Knapp:

- Grants shows a loss, loss of salaries
- Have those positions been abolished or unfunded

Ms. Merrick, They were expecting a grant, which they didn't receive so they didn't hire the people

Chairman Knapp:

- Asking for a 2 grade upgrade for an assistant
- Has there been a change in job description

Ms. Merrick:

- True reflection of the particular Assistant handling multiple departments
- About 800 staff
- Magnitude of responsibility of the job

Department of Ault & Long Term Care Services: Lisa Alford, Commissioner Barry Beck, Deputy Commissioner, Sandy Miller-Martens, Administrative Officer and Patrice Gile, Budget Analyst. (4-99)

Lisa Alford presented the following:



Onondaga County Department of Adult & Long Term Care Services

2016 Budget Presentation

Lisa D. Alford, MA
Commissioner

September 17, 2015

Good morning, Chairman McMahon, Members of the Ways and Means Committee and other Legislators. I'm Lisa Alford, Commissioner of the Department of Adult & Long Term Care Services.

Joining me, at the table today, are Barry Beck, Deputy Commissioner, Sandy Miller-Martens, Administrative Officer and Patrice Gile, Budget Analyst. Ellen McCauley, Public Information Specialist is acting as our technical assistant for the presentation.



Department Mission:

To provide support to improve the quality of life and overall well-being for adults and those with long-term care needs.

Our Department's Mission is to provide support to improve the quality of life and overall well-being for adults and those with long-term care needs.

We accomplish this, and support our community, through advocacy, planning, coordination, direct services and program funding.

Department Units

- Office for Aging
- NY Connects
- Long Term Care Resource Center
- Mental Health Services
- Adult Protective Services
- Veterans Service Agency

The Department is comprised of six units. The Office for Aging which serves those age 60 and older and Caregivers. NY Connects and the Long Term Care Resource Center which serves older adults and persons with disabilities. Mental

Health Services, Adult Protective Services and the Veterans Service Agency all serve adults age 18 and older

The Office for Aging provides a wide range of cost effective, community-based services, that:

1. *Support healthy aging with evidence-based health promotion programs and Senior Center activities.*
2. *Programs such as Meals on Wheels, more than forty Senior Dining Sites, EISEP - Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program, HIICAP - Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program and Community Services such as Neighborhood Advisors and Transportation, all help delay the high expense of institutional care.*
3. *The Office for Aging assists our caregivers with respite in the home and at social adult day programs; with support groups, and with the Institute for Caregivers which offers education and training.*

Mental Health Services

Provides:

- Planning, Quality Improvement and Training Services
- Single Point of Access (SPOA) Service
- The Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program
- Contracts for Community Services

Mental Health Services Provides:

1. *Planning, Quality Improvement, and Training services for mental health, substance abuse disorders and developmental and intellectual disabilities.*
2. *It provides access to Case Management and Residential Services to individuals with serious mental illness under the Single Point of Access (SPOA) service.*
3. *The unit provides court ordered and enhanced care coordination services to individuals under the Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program.*
4. *And Mental Health contracts for community services for those with mental illness, substance abuse disorders and developmental and intellectual disabilities.*

NY Connects

Provides:

- Information, assistance and resources on Long Term Care Services for any age
- In-home nursing and social assessments

Long Term Care Resource Center

Provides:

- On-going, medically based, case management for children and adults
- Personal and Consumer Directed home care services

NY Connects provides:

1. *Comprehensive and unbiased information and linkages to people of any age seeking Long Term Care services.*
2. *In-home nursing and social assessments to assist families in choosing appropriate levels of care.*

The Long Term Care Resource Center provides:

1. *Ongoing medically-based case management for children and adults receiving personal and consumer directed home care services.*

Adult Protective Services

Provides:

At risk individuals, 18 and older, services to keep them safe from harm due to their inability to care for themselves or because of neglect, or abuse, by others:

- In-Home Investigations
- Case Management
- Legal Interventions
- Referrals to Community Services

Adult Protective Services provides, at risk individuals, 18 and older, services to keep them safe from harm due to their inability to care for themselves or because of neglect, or abuse, by others.

We conduct in-home investigations, offer case management and legal interventions when appropriate.

We collaborate with, and make referrals to, other community agencies that can provide needed services.

Veterans Service Agency

Provides:

Assistance to Veterans, and surviving spouses, with:

- Benefit Claims
- Military Records
- Burial
- Referrals

The Veterans Service Agency assists Veterans with:

1. *Preparing their claims for Federal, State, or Local benefits.*
2. *It helps surviving spouses of Veterans in need of information and those applying for survivor's benefits.*
3. *The unit assists Veterans with obtaining copies of their official military records and other related papers.*
4. *The agency works with honorably discharged county Veterans and their spouses who wish to be buried in the Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery.*
5. *And it refers Veterans to agencies and organizations for other needed services.*

2015 Key Impact Areas

Aging Services - Targeted Outreach

Mental Health - Increased Referrals

NY Connects - Pilot County

Adult Protective - Complex Cases

Veterans Services - More Claims Processed

Now I'll share several key accomplishments from the past year.

Aging Services collaborated with the Vietnamese Community Center to provide aging services for the Vietnamese Elders. This led to an 80% increase in the number of older Asian adults served, exceeding the NYS Office for Aging target by 16%.

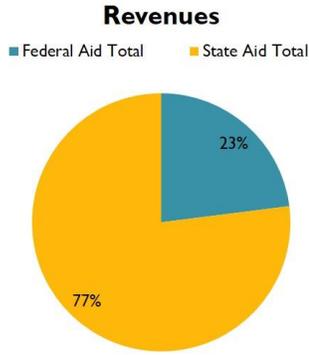
In Mental Health, the Single Point of Access (SPOA) referrals are up 19% and the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program continues to have larger and more complex caseloads, increasing 12% in 2015.

NY Connects was selected by the New York State Office for Aging as one of three pilot counties to assist with, and recommend procedures for, the statewide implementation of "No Wrong Door." No Wrong Door is a single point of access system under the Balancing Incentive Program.

Adult Protective Services has seen a 5% increase in referrals and in the complexity of their cases.

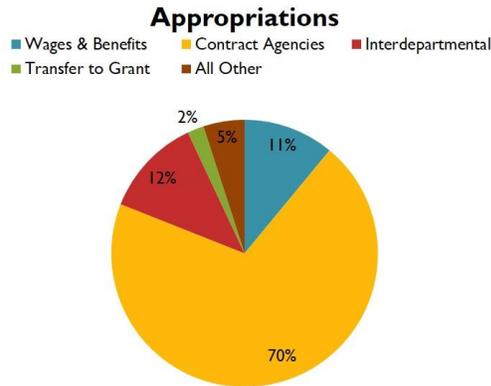
And by adding a full time service officer, the Veterans Service Agency was able to process an average of 551 claims per month, a 22% increase from 2014, making Onondaga County one of the leading counties in New York State.

Budget Summary



Here is a pie chart showing our department's revenue. As you can see the majority of our funding comes from New York State.

Budget Summary



This graphic shows our appropriations, the majority which are to community-based contract agencies.

Key Budget Changes

Personnel \$50,980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step Increases • Two Positions PT to FT
Contractual Expense (\$758,040)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry Forwards • COLA



Chairman McMahon:

- Stated that this was a great presentation and that the legislature confirmed a good person for the job
- Last year this body had two initiatives
 - Partnership with Clear Path for Veterans
 - Syracuse University, Veterans Legal Clinic
 - Do these initiatives fall in Community Contract Agencies line
 - where are they in the budget
 - Are these initiative funded at the levels appropriated for last year

Mr. Morgan responded, yes

Ms. Alford:

- Last year appropriated for two, this year only got a request from Clear Path
- Legal Clinic did not request any funding

Mr. Jordan:

- Last year at budget time questions were raised regarding burials at Veteran's Cemetery
- Understanding that the Federal Government reimburses at different rates depending on the circumstances of the veteran
- The County's fee schedule doesn't reflect those varying reimbursements
- Is money being left on table with what the Federal Government will reimburse the veterans family
- We charge \$500 the Federal Government will max out up to \$1,500
- If the federal government will reimburse \$1,500, why aren't we charging more instead of billing our taxpayers for these burials when it could be offset by reimbursements from the federal government

Ms. Alford:

- We are subsidizing some of the burial costs
- Budgeted for 50 burials, individuals get the subsidy from the state then the county supplements that

Mr. Jordan:

- We are charging for a burial, which is around \$500; the Federal Government has a varying schedule depending on certain factors such as if they died in service
- Maximum amount of reimbursement is \$1,500, we're not charging \$1,500, we're charging \$500

Ms. Alford:

- \$500 is just for the plot

Ms. Dennis:

- This year from January 1, 2015 to present the Veterans Cemetery has buried 222 people
- Consistent from other years
- Number is based on those who were either indigent or prepaid funerals for either their spouses or themselves: example, a young lady passed away April 2014, she paid prior to her death when the cost was only \$250
- The Federal Government will not reimburse for a spouse
- If the rate is raised, it raised for everyone including spouses, dependents and veterans

Mr. Jordan:

- The County's fee schedule should more mirror the federal reimbursement schedule, not just have a flat rate

Ms. Dennis:

- The State reimburses the County \$261 for each indigent burial regardless if spouse, dependent, or veteran
- The government has an eligible criteria, not every veteran qualifies for the federal reimbursement:
 - Would have to have died in a VA hospital
 - Been in receipt of a monthly benefit, compensation, or pension
- Onondaga County has spent \$65,218.44 on 37 indigent burials
- VA reimbursement has been \$15,257
- State reimbursement \$9,297.05
- Not everyone was earth buried, some were cremated, some of the bodies were donated
- Federal government will reimburse for an earth burial, if the veteran died in a VA hospital or was receiving monthly pension or compensation, reimburse a burial allowance up to \$745 for a plot, if the decedent is a veteran VA will pay up to \$300
- We charge \$500

Mr. Jordan asked to be provided data on how many burials are veterans and how many are family members

Ms. Dennis said she would provide that information

Mr. Jordan asked, what is the county doing to capture the higher reimbursement that may be available

Ms. Dennis responded that the reimbursement difference is only \$39

Mr. Jordan indicated that he had this question a year ago, they've had a year to get an answer

Ms. Alford & Ms. Dennis responded that they will get back to you on that

Mrs. Ervin asked how much is the actual cost to open the plot and bury someone

Ms. Alford & Ms. Dennis responded that they will get back to them on that

Mrs. Ervin:

- It doesn't matter how much could be captured from the federal government if the actual cost to bury someone is \$300
- No real reason to charge them anymore than already charging them
- Would hurt to say that we are going to charge our veterans, that served our county and protected us all of these years, extra money because the federal government might reimburse them something

Mr. Jordan and Mrs. Ervin request the actual amount it is costing to bury someone, then we'll know if we're capturing enough money.

Mrs. Ervin responded to Mr. Jordan:

- Don't see any reason, just because there might be more money out there

Chairman Knapp:

- Frustration with the myriad of rules
- Almost every case has a different situation, scenario and reimbursement profile

Mr. Jordan:

- Understanding that the cost to bury individual is significantly more than \$500
- Why are the tax payers subsidizing this if there's more money on the table
- Ask to provide what the actual cost is to bury an individual, what is the eligibility criteria is to be buried in the Veterans Cemetery
- The issue is that we are running out of space at the Veterans Cemetery

Chairman Knapp indicated that there is a sizeable request from Parks to expand it

Ms. Dennis:

- Eligibility criteria, must have an honorable discharge (no one that has been dishonorably discharged is eligible for burial)
- Have proof of military service
- Information is reviewed, then decided if they can be buried in the Veteran Cemetery

Mr. Jordan asked if they have to have connection with Onondaga County

Ms. Dennis:

- Would have had to have lived in Onondaga County; or
- Enlisted in Onondaga County; or
- Gone to school in Onondaga County; or
- Must have resided in Onondaga County for at least 5 years if recently moved into the county

Mr. Jordan asked what is done to verify eligibility

Ms. Dennis

- Need some type of documentation
- For residency, use Onondaga County's property tax roll to verify individual has been in Onondaga County at least 5 years
- The discharge paperwork would indicate if enlisted in Onondaga County

Chairman Knapp responded that there is a DD214 with all information

Mr. Jordan indicated that he has heard of people being buried in the Veterans Cemetery that have no affiliation with Onondaga County, other than they may be from Oswego County and were sworn in, in Onondaga County. Another example would be if they were sworn in here and have lived in Alabama for the last 50 years and they pass away and the family ships them up here for burial because it only cost \$500

Ms. Dennis indicated that the criteria is written in the resolution

Chairman Knapp, is that criteria of the Legislature's making? Ms. Dennis responded yes sir

Chairman Knapp, we have the ability to change that criteria. Ms. Dennis responded yes sir

Mrs. Ervin:

- We had this discussion last year now again this year
- Need to make certain that we don't try to save \$200 on the backs of those who have served this country honorably and died
- Married to a disabled veteran, if I were to suffer the scrutiny to bury him in our cemetery it would hurt tremendously
- Need to be careful of how we decide on this

Mr. Jordan:

- Not suggesting that we put any further burdens on the veterans family
- Suggesting that if we can receive reimbursement for the costs we're incurring from the federal government, that money shouldn't be left on the table
- The increase wouldn't burden the families at all

Chairman Knapp, need to make sure if any changes are made it's only for people that are eligible for reimbursement

Chairman Knapp:

- Presentation talked about 2 positions that were 103, now converting to be fully funded
- Should there be a corresponding decrease in the 103 line
- Are there other plans for that

In response to Chairman Knapp's question, they were part-time now they are full-time

Chairman Knapp were they always being funded out of 101, Ms. Alford responded, yes

Chairman Knapp asked what the 103 line is used for

Ms. Alford:

- Temporary and part-time positions
- Two community health nurses in the resource center
- Two clerical staff in the resource center
- Last year those were the areas expected to have decreased due to Medicaid Managed Care and that did not take place as quickly as thought

Chairman Knapp asked, does the State takeover of Medicaid effect you

Ms. Alford responded that in the resource center there has been decrease

Chairman Knapp asked to please provide a list of contracts

Chairman Knapp, what are the typical contractual expenses such as Clear Path for Veterans

Ms. Alford:

- The resource center would have contracts with homecare agencies, providing personal care to persons with disabilities
- Mental agencies would be agencies that provide mental health services to seniors in the community
- Aging will be with contracts that provide services to the elderly
- EISEP program contracts with homecare services that provide non-medical personal care
- Large amount goes for dining sites and programs like the meals on wheels program

Chairman Knapp:

- You are asking to upgrade the Deputy Commissioner position, one is filled and one vacant
- Do we still need two

Ms. Alford:

- Yes, still need the two
- Asking for the increase because in this department the Deputy Commissioners are at lower grade than comparable positions, putting the positions on par with other deputy commissioner positions in the county
- Increase in aging community in turn means an increase in services needed and more complex cases

Chairman Knapp glad to see funding for Clear Path, amazing program and a great return on investment

Mrs. Ervin:

- Thanked Lisa for the great presentation, understands that the job is not easy, has helped greatly with her mother-in-laws situation
- In Onondaga County there doesn't seem to be enough services for people with mental health needs
- Asked if they are feeling that also

Ms. Alford:

- Have meeting with some of the providers in the community and are seeing the need, especially for people on Medicaid
- Looking to get additional resources from state to assist
- Definitely a need and the need is growing
- Increases in the need for support in a residential setting, not necessarily a nursing home, but more supportive type housing
- Looking at more pier respite options for people in the community with mental health issues

Mrs. Ervin commended on the outreach and advertising, letting people know about the services

Ms. Alford gave kudos to the new public information specialist Ellen McCauley was helpful in:

- Putting the caregiver catalog now on the 211 page
- Giving information to the medical society
- Finding ways that persons that should be referred to us are
- Presentations to hospitals on discharge planning, letting individuals know about resources

Chairman Knapp, year to date, are the number of cases up or down

Ms. Dennis, we've been able to process more claims, approximately 22% increase

Department of Children & Family Services: David Sutkow, Commissioner, Linda Lopez, Deputy Commissioner (4-108)

**ONONDAGA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
2016 BUDGET PRESENTATION
SEPTEMBER 17, 2015**

Good morning, Mr. Knapp, and members of the legislature. I am pleased to present our department's recommended budget for 2016.

Our recommended budget of \$78.7 million is slightly less than our 2015 BAM. Probably better news is that our local dollar request of \$19.8 million is 8.5% lower than this year.

There are two major accounts with sizeable changes – State Training Schools and the Foster Care account. State Training is down \$2.7 million, Foster Care up \$2.4 million.

The State Training School account involves payments made by us on behalf of youth who have committed crimes and sentenced by criminal court. In the past we have been required to pay a per diem rate, set by the state, for any Onondaga child placed in a state Office of Children and Family Services residential facility. In this year's state budget, the State legislature set a cap on local payments. Instead of what was, in effect, an open ended local obligation, the legislature set a statewide cap of \$55 million, to be paid by counties based on their proportionate use of beds. This action has no programmatic implications – but is, of course, an immense financial relief. We are anticipating that this legislative action will reduce our annual financial liabilities by \$2.7 million.

The increase in the Foster Care account is slightly deceptive. The \$25.6 million request is 10.5% higher than the 2015 budget.

But that doesn't mean what you think it means. We're not really looking at a \$2 million increase in actual program costs. When we develop our budget, we have to use projections from so early in the year, and when we were working on the budget for 2015 those early numbers lead us to be overly optimistic in our projections. As history sometimes tells us, early projections are sometimes off.

For 2016 we are projecting that this account will not be that different from today's trend. The overall number of children represented in this account is pretty flat; the foster care caseload is up, reflecting more difficult cases we're seeing, but the adoption subsidy caseload is down as children age out of the system. Financially, we're looking at 2016 to be a continuation of the trend we're currently seeing.

There are several other accounts with variables that I would like to briefly bring to your attention. I'd like to discuss them in the context of our department's goals and direction.

Two years ago, when the county reorganized its human service departments to bring similar services closer together, I told you about three fundamental goals that would set our direction:

*Efficient and effective administration of our core services,
Better coordination or integration of all services across traditional program lines, and
A broader focus for our services, beyond crisis resolution toward children's well-being.*

I'd like to discuss our budget variables within the context of these three goals.

The first account is the 101 Salary account. Included in this is a request for 5 additional casework positions for our child welfare division.

This request directly relates to our goal of effective and efficient administration of our core services. Our child welfare division includes Child Protective Services. It is here where we respond to hotline reports of possible child abuse and neglect. This is the area where we address safety and risk and do what we must to ensure children are safe. Very simply, we are seeing a lot of very concerning, very troubling situations today. Mental health issues, chemical addictions, limited parenting abilities, have always been issues we've dealt with. But what's happening today – what's different now – seems very much connected to the epidemic of drugs on the street, and the impact they are having on families. Both from the data I've seen, and just from talking with caseworkers about what they are experiencing, the level of complexity of the cases, and the subsequent demand this is placing on our operations, is greater than anything we've seen.

Just to show you what I mean, the number of hotline reports we are receiving is only marginally higher than two years ago. However, the complexity of what we're seeing is causing us to involve ourselves deeper, devote more resources, and stay involved longer than in the past.

We are doing as best we can to address this demand on our services, and I have to say that the partners we have, especially with Family Court, do a lot in our favor. When I go to any meeting that involves other counties, and when the discussion lands on the sometimes contentious relationship districts have with their court system, it just reminds me how thankful I am to be here and work with partners who help us develop better system responses to the situations we're seeing. But even that isn't enough, and that is why this budget is requesting additional staff to help us in our work to keep kids safe.

The second account I want to draw to your attention to is the Professional Services account.

\$212,000 of the increase in this account relates our intention to expand our mental health clinic. This relates directly to the second of our departmental goals, that of better cross-disciplinary work. Improved service coordination across previously separate program lines is the major reason behind the county reorganization of departments. We're making strides here, and this request relates directly to this goal. Many of the children involved in the child welfare system have mental health issues need addressing, and very simply, we do not have enough mental health services. Waiting lists for services exist, and this kind of backlog benefits no one. Our intention in this budget is to expand the capacity in our county operated clinic. With this expansion, we will dedicate some of the resources for the exclusive use of children and families involved in the child welfare program so that they can enter service immediately. This proposal works on many levels: First, it's a financial win for the department and the county. While our expenses will increase for the additional therapists to be used, our revenue will also increase and cover the complete costs of this expansion.

Second, and most importantly, it addresses a critical need, especially in our child welfare program and will help families address mental health concerns far more quickly.

The last account I want to mention is the contractual services account. Included in this account is an increase that I am, to be candid, honored to be presenting to you. It involves the expansion of the Imagination Library.

This increase relates to the third departmental goal related to child well-being. What I said to you last year holds true today. Our services and interventions, as good as they are, are heavily focused on family crises. Crisis mitigation has been our historic stock in trade. What makes this department different, and where we really want to expand our focus is on child well-being; going beyond the crisis and working to make sure the child is thriving. In practical terms, this means helping young children get on track to start school, and for older children, to be doing well and succeeding in the school setting. You know, and we know, how important this is. In our county, almost one-half of preschoolers aren't considered ready for kindergarten; and about one-half of city youth don't graduate from high school within four years. No matter what we do with families in crisis, I don't think we can call ourselves successful if those children enter adulthood unprepared for the life ahead of them. Last year, as our first step to promote this larger agenda of well-being, the county executive proposed, and you approved, an allocation that allowed us to provide financial support to the Literacy Coalition's Imagination Library. Today, all pre-school age children in the City of Syracuse have the opportunity to receive a free, age-appropriate book each month. I'm very pleased to report to you that it is working, and working well. Not only are parents reading to their children, but kindergarten readiness – the ultimate goal of this - is improving. Research that the Literacy Coalition has done is showing a 29% increase in kindergarten readiness for those children enrolled in the Imagination Library. Since kindergarten readiness is an issue that affects all children, in every town and village in the county, County Executive Mahoney has requested additional funding of \$200,000 to expand this service throughout the county, and I am honored to that this request is part of our department's budget.

One more point on this topic before concluding: Our County's work with the Imagination Library and childhood literacy isn't just financial. There's one chart I want you to see.

This chart, also prepared by the Imagination Library, shows monthly enrollment numbers. As you can see, over the years, it's been somewhat steady – rising and falling slightly. But look at the last few months. Something happened here. That something was us; or to be more precise, that someone was Jamel: Jamel Carey. This summer, we made a huge, concerted effort on enrollment into the program. We hired a summer aide, and his job was to work exclusively on enrollment. When Jamel started, he said his personal goal was 1,000 more enrollments. Well, he did it. I'm pointing this out for two reasons. The main one is that I want to recognize and thank this young man for doing what he did and the impact he personally is going to have on children here in our community. The second reason is to show you that it can be done. All this talk during the reorganization about not being satisfied with the past, about doing things differently, about new partnerships to turn the curve, are all eminently doable. Yes, it takes a lot of work. It's sometimes hard to break out of the mold and take on a new direction. But it can be done, and is being done. And we already have some results saying that it's having the impact we were looking for.

So, that's the brief summary of our budget:

To recap our more significant changes, both overall costs and local costs are down. Two program accounts - State Training Schools and Foster Care - represent the largest cost swings. Some changes in the administrative accounts— notably Salaries with the addition of caseworker staff, Professional Services for the expansion of the mental health clinic, and Contracts, most notably to expand the Imagination Library to the entire county—reflect both pressures this department and this community are currently facing, as well as opportunities for improved outcomes for families and children

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Child Welfare

The Heroin Epidemic Hits Central New York by **Lauren Foti, BDJ 667.01**
Published on February 18, 2015 at 11:03am

Heroin-gone-wild in Central New York causes jumps in overdoses, deaths outbreak

Katko, Hanna sponsor House bill to deal with heroin, prescription painkiller epidemic



"Syracuse is Spike Nation": NY Times Magazine focuses on Synthetic Marijuana



DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Goal: Efficient and Effective administration of our core services.

Request: 5 Caseworkers in Child Welfare.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Department Goals

- *Efficient and effective administration of our core services;
- *Better Coordination or Integration of all services across traditional program lines;
- A broader focus for our services, beyond crisis resolution toward children's well-being.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Early Returns are Sometimes Wrong

Dewey Defeats Truman



Foster Care Account

		% Change from Previous Year
2014 Actual	\$24.1M	+6.6%
2015BAM	\$23.2M	
2015 Projected	\$24.8M	+2.9% from 2014 Actual
2016 Recommended	\$25.6M	+3.2% from 2015 Projected

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

2016 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

	2015	2016	Change
BAM		Recommended	
Gross	\$79.1M	\$78.7M	-0.5%
Local	\$21.7M	\$19.8M	-8.5%

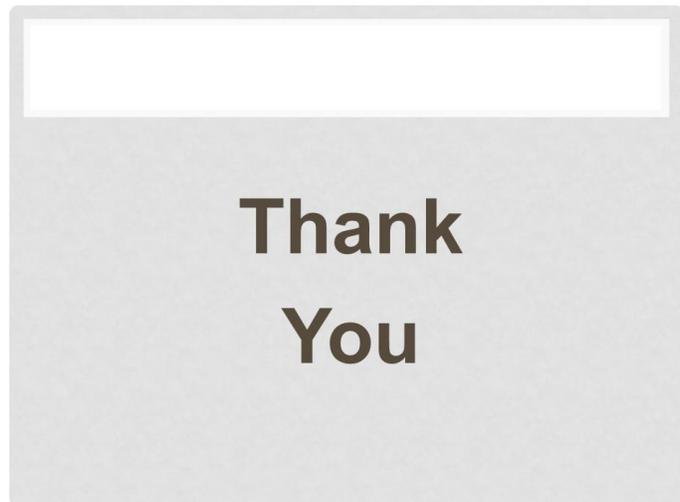
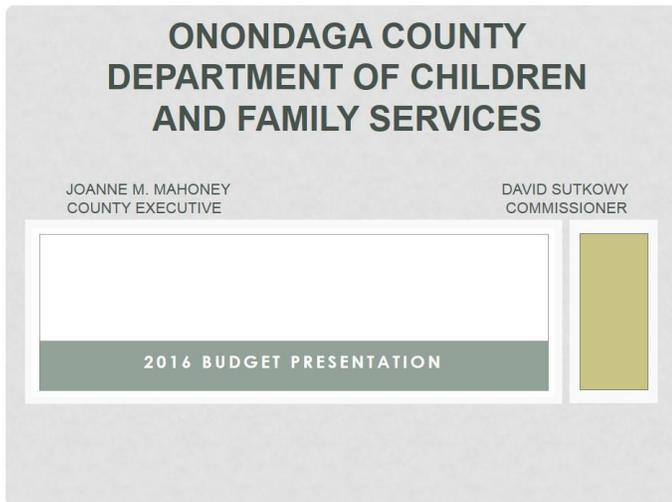
What's changed?

State Training Schools	-\$ 2.7M	-63.9%
Foster Care	+\$2.4M	+10.5%

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

2016 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

	2015	2016	Change
BAM		Recommended	
Gross	\$79.1M	\$78.7M	-0.5%
Local	\$21.7M	\$19.8M	-8.5%



Chairman McMahon asked how Jamel was hired

Mr. Sutkowy responded that Jamel is a seasonal, part-time employee

Chairman McMahon:

- Hopefully Jamel will be offered a full-time position when he is ready
- That type of ambition we'd be fortunate to have

Chairman McMahon:

- Last year was the first year funding was approved for Imagination Library
- Results are fantastic
- With the first year execution, was it for preschoolers just in the city district schools or did it include charter schools, private schools etc.

Mr. Sutkowy responded, kids that live in the city, preschool kids regardless what preschool

Chairman McMahon asked how we let schools know about the program

Mr. Sutkowy:

- Extensive recruitment effort through every major provider
- Many of the families that benefit most from this program come to the attention of county departments, Department of Social Services or the Health Department

Chairman McMahon:

- Many of the neighborhoods, particularly in my neighborhood and Legislator William's district aren't city schools
- How to make sure that this program is getting into schools like the Southside Charter Academy School

Ms. Rooney:

- The major venue used for recruitment is the hospitals
- When a woman has a baby, the hospital signs that family up immediately with the Imagination Library program

Chairman McMahon:

- Expansion of this program is a great idea
- Traditional urban problems are now throughout the county and poverty has no boundaries
- How will this be opened up to schools like Liverpool, CNS, Baldwinsville and for any child of those school districts and others in the pre k

Mr. Sutkowy:

- This program is for any child 0-5
- Every kid gets an age appropriate book a month in the mail, this is a Dolly Parton initiative
- This program gets parents reading to kids and kids reading to parents

Chairman McMahon:

- This is fantastic
- Interest to see how this is going to roll out to other school districts
- As a spouse of an educator who has dealt with at risk youth, once these kids get behind they are usually behind forever as far as reading
- This is an offense, budgeting on this end so hopefully we won't be investing later on over in the Corrections budget

- If the numbers are light in a school like Southside Academy Charter, we need to send Jamel there to start working it and then tell us how he's going to roll this out to other school districts

Chairman McMahon:

- Wants to understand the \$200,000 for mental health services
- Agrees with Legislator Ervin, today especially when it comes to crime, the mental health issues get politicized and leads to conversations about gun control when mental health is the driving factor behind this
- Policymakers need to do a better job understanding what is actually being done for the mental health issues
- Where do we need to invest to get people the help they need
- \$200,000 for children's mental health in clinic, what exactly does that mean

Ms. Lopez:

- Great question, this is for the expansion to the clinic
- The clinic is traditional in that families and children come and receive clinical therapy services
- Can receive individual, family or group therapy
- Community needs the safety net that the clinic provides, there are about 10 clinics that don't take some of the insurances out there, we do
- Help to organize childcare so that a family can bring one child in for therapy, while leaving other children at home
- Will allow open walk in hours
- Desire to support child welfare, have a clinician satellite at the Civic Center to work with children in the welfare system
- Juvenile Justice Initiative, doing mental health screening on every young person that touches the Juvenile Justice System, screening for mental health needs, substance abuse needs, trauma needs and suicide needs and getting them the services and support to hopefully remediate that

Chairman McMahon, what other mental health providers in the community does the county contract out with

Ms. Lopez:

- ARISE
- Liberty Recourses
- Syracuse Behavior Health

Mr. Jordan:

- The emphasis on early education is important and the long term benefits are enormous
- Has discussed before, part of the problem is lack of support in the household; a child goes home and the parent tells them that schools not important, belittles the child and this hurts the child
- How do you change attitudes in the community
- Do you provide parental education
- How do you insure that people that have children have the skills necessary to raise those children in a healthy, nurturing environment
- What if anything is the County doing to facilitate that, help the parents gather the necessary tools to be good nurturing parents

Mr. Sutkowy:

- Agrees, this is central the departments mission
- Some situations in what has been seen warrants a petition to Family Court
- Services and interventions can be mandated for the parents
- Other circumstances it voluntary, safety and risk don't rise to the level of family court intervention
- Doing two things:
 - Beginning of this school year have dedicated two teams, 11 caseworkers and 2 supervisor, working exclusively with City School District. All communication with the student intervention teams, the Principals, social workers and the teachers, with this department will be centralized through these teams.
 - Building a follow up monitoring function. Any unresolved issue will play out and will play out in the school setting. School monitoring and touching base with the child and family even after the case closed will reinforce the support, academically, behavioral etc.

Mr. Jordan; learn most from example, their parents example. An educated parent or one that values education will filter down to the child. Kids growing up with graphic video games and reality programs with such rudeness presented, lack of civility. How do you teach a parent to foster and nurture a child

Mr. May:

- Ask to be provided with a program report on Hillbrook and what the average cost is per child
- Attendance versus capacity
- What is the cost for the teachers to and cost of each child from outside counties
- Does the food increase translate to more kids or because of the cost of food

Mr. Sutkowy responded the cost of food is the increase, Onondaga County has 8-9 kids remanded to Hillbrook on a daily basis

Mr. May asked what the capacity would be with everything open

Mr. Sutkowy responded 32 with closed down wing, the wildcard in this is when the State raises the age

Mr. Jordan what's cause for the increase in foster care:

Mr. Sutkowy:

- Foster care account is both foster care placements and adoption subsidies
- There are more foster care placements, 10-12 placement for 2016 than in 2015
- On any given day there are 350 placements, most in foster homes, approximately 25 are in residential facilities

Mr. Jordan comment that was a large budget.

- 700 children receiving adoption subsidies support until child ages out of the foster care system

Mr. Jordan asked if that is reimbursable, Mr. Sutkowy responded yes

Chairman Knapp:

- Creating 4 caseworker positions, asking those to be funded
- What is the 5th position

Mr. Sutkowy:

- Four are new creates
- One is currently unfunded and asking it to be funded

Chairman Knapp asked if the mental day treatment program is driving the increase in maintenance, utilities and rents.

Mr. Sutkowy responded yes

- Currently located on the Hutchings Campus, they are renovated their buildings and need the space
- We are not in their long term plans,
- Currently looking for space
- Don't know where we are going and will probably have to pay rent, haven't made any commitments yet

Mr. Morgan added currently we don't pay rent

Ms. Rooney followed up with, if we were able to stay would start paying utilities, less the expense, then moving off campus where we would pay rent and utilities then what Hutching would cost paying just utilities

Chairman Knapp requested a list of contracts

Chairman Knapp:

- Narrative in the contractual expense line, Moving STSJP from grants to operating

Mr. Sutkowy:

- STSJP is funding stream for Juvenal Justice

Chairman Knapp, the grants line is going down, did we lose other things out of that

Mr. Morgan:

- the OnCare grant that has been received for past 6 years is going away, which results in the decrease
- STSJP is 100% money that has been running through the operating budget, which doesn't make sense

- Moving the expense and the revenue out to the grant
- As the grant was winding down, been able to decrease that line
- The \$200,000 line that has been in the budget the last few years is what is supporting what's left of OnCare

Mr. Knapp:

- County Service Health increased almost \$565,000

Mr. Sutkowy responded that was for the clinic expansion and can pay for itself

Chairman McMahon asked if the OnPoint for college allocation is in the budget

Mr. Sutkowy responded yes, in the contract line

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIMBERLY MEMORY, Assistant Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: W&M REVIEW OF HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
DATE: 9/17/15

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Beth Martas x3	Personnel
Colleen Gungy	DSS-ES
-Tanya Rose	Health - WIC UMA
-Enn Woods	Health - WIC UMA