



COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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REFERENCE:

- ☒ Council
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Youth
- ☐ Disability Services
- ☐ Substance Use Disorder
- ☐ Transportation

Approved February 23, 2022

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

Call In and Webex Only

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

S. Cohen	R. Horoschak
B. Renkens	R. Cooper
S. Elliot	F. Leddy
J. Cassano	J. Spencer

EX-OFFICIO

C. Baxevane
N. Troche

SUPPORT STAFF

M. O'Reilly
E. Neukum
S. Becker

GUESTS

C. Sagona
S. Lax
D. Prisco
S. Freedman
M. Scherer
K. Bloodgood
K. Seppelt
B. Mastrianni

COUNTY DIV. REPS.

S. Nekola
L. Piazza-Long
K. Burghardt

*Designees

I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT:

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk's Office."

The Council allows time for comments from the public at the end of each meeting. Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes per person per meeting, in order to ensure that all attendees have an opportunity to be heard. Brief written comments may also be submitted for

distribution during the meeting.

M. O'Reilly opened the regular monthly meeting of the Council at 3:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

M. O'Reilly read HSAC's Statement of Purpose.

Due to the recent public health crisis, COVID-19, this meeting was call in and Webex ONLY

- II. ***APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** M. O'Reilly asked for a motion to approve the October 27, 2021 minutes. A motion was made by B. Renkens and S. Cohen seconded to approve the meeting minutes. There was one abstention. All members were in favor. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.
- III. **DCF Needs Assessment Updates: (Meagan O'Reilly)** – M. O'Reilly stated that at the last meeting she provided an overview of what was anticipated for the DCF Needs Assessment for 2022. She noted that at the December State HSAC meeting, they were advised by DCF that they are going to put the process on hold for six months. She advised that this is good news to have additional time to plan and does not have any further updates other than it is on hold for right now. M. O'Reilly is hopeful that at the February State HSAC meeting more information will be shared so she may provide an update at a future County HSAC meeting.
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS:**
- A. **Housing Committee** – R. Cooper stated that from the Housing Committee's latest meeting, it was decided to put out a survey to three separate groups. The groups would be landlords, providers, and consumers. She requested a vote from the HSAC membership to approve the survey. If approved, it will be available within the next couple of weeks to a variety of places such as libraries, offices, different markets and in county buildings.
- R. Cooper also conveyed the committee is really close to finalizing the artwork for the LINK buses and the libraries. It is anticipated to be ready within the next month. She provided high accolades to E. Neukum for her support and assistance. S. Cohen offered kudos to R. Cooper for her hard work.
- R. Horoschak made a Motion and F. Leddy seconded for the Housing Committee to release a survey. All were in favor. No Abstentions and no Oppositions.***
- V. **OLD BUSINESS:**
- A. **Committees** – M. O'Reilly conveyed that in speaking with J. Collevecchio and J. Gorman, they wanted to ensure there is a strong grasp on each of the committees and confirm there is a Chair for each of those committees. She enforced the importance of having a Chair chosen. She noted there were a few emails sent out in 2021 addressing this topic. R. Horoschak conveyed the By-Laws and Housing Committees are secure with Chairs and Vice-Chairs. It is believed that the Outreach & Communication and Nominations Committees are in need of a Chair.
- M. O'Reilly stated a current list of membership for each committee will be forwarded to the council. If anything needs to be updated and/or changed to please reply to either J. Collevecchio, J. Gorman or herself so an update may be available for the next meeting.

VI. REPORTS:

- A. County Department of Human Services (CDHS):** Happy New Year everyone! M. O'Reilly conveyed that at the January 4, 2022 reorganization meeting, Commissioner Lanza was sworn in as the Commissioner Director and Commissioner Rich was sworn in as the Commissioner Director. The Commissioner liaison for Human Services will continue to be Commissioner Van Doren.

The County was awarded funding from the State to support Code Blue efforts in 2022. The funds will be used for the Warming Center through Hunterdon Helpline.

This week is also the Point In Time Count. This effort took place last night, January 25, 2022. Communications have been forwarded to the participating agencies with information on trainings. The surveys are identical to last year; there were no modifications for the questions. This year represents a mandatory street count. Efforts are underway to organization the street count and she asked if anyone is interested or anyone who needs more information to please reach-out to her.

M. O'Reilly conveyed that this week the state announced the Emergency Rescue Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) program, - financed by the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) - provides up to \$35,000 in assistance to cover mortgage arrearages and other housing cost delinquencies for eligible homeowners negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The ERMA application portal opens on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 9 AM. Access the application portal at <https://njerma.com/>
- Free housing counseling is available to assist with applications. Find a participating counselor group at this link <https://www.nj.gov/dca/hmfa/consumers/foreclosure/counselor/>.
- Contact (855) 647-7700 or HAFservicing@njhmfa.gov for additional support.

To qualify for the ERMA program, homeowners must meet the following requirements:

- Be a New Jersey homeowner with a demonstrated COVID-19 related financial hardship occurring after January 20, 2020;
- Own and occupy an eligible primary residence;
- Have an income at or below 150% of their county's AMI here: https://www.njhousing.gov/dca/hmfa/covid19/docs/HAF_Incom_%20Limit_SHEET_A.pdf.

Once the ERMA portal opens, applicants can submit an EMRA application using a personal computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet. Housing counselors are available now to assist homeowners that need help understanding all available options and through the application process once it opens.

M. O'Reilly stated the Emergency Rental Assistance Program offered by the Department of Community Affairs stopped accepting applications effective December 15, 2021. If this program opens again, communication will be forwarded out.

- B. NJ Department of Human Services (DHS):** N. Troche reported that due to Phase 2 of COVID, the department staff will be returning to the office next week. Due to the COVID surge in cases, DHS will combine expedited approval of emergency hiring for the next 90 days. There is a shortage of personnel and DHS is hiring everywhere particularly in their facilities and even in the

daycare settings as well. They are responsible for expediting the federal and state background checks to get people back into these sites working.

The NJ Family Care is covering eight over the counter COVID tests at participating pharmacies. This allows people to get tested at home.

Some of the counties had been inquiring about DHS's regulations. The regulations that govern this body and the State HSACs. N. Troche conveyed they are currently being reviewed at the State HSAC level. Legal personnel have also been looking at the regulations.

The Governor has announced that he will officially appoint Commissioner Sarah Adelman. She has been very active through the tough transition during the pandemic. This is very good news and many are excited to see this happen.

- C. **NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P):** C. Baxevane echoed N. Troche's announcement that the staff will be returning to the office on Monday. Since the schools are back in session, there had been an increase in referrals. For the month of December, there were 259 active children; 16 are in placement; they received 43 child protective referrals. Out of the 43, 14 were physical abuse, 13 were sexual abuse and the others were neglect. There were 2 child welfare cases and DCP&P had seen a huge increase in parents abusing drugs and/or alcohol due to COVID and parents being home, a lot of parents that had been clean and doing well had relapsed. There will be a need to hire a CADC in the Hunterdon office.

C. Baxevane announced her office had taken on a new initiative through Averahealth where they will be able to administer oral swabs to their clients themselves. The case workers will go out and if deem that someone is under the influence, they will have these test kits with them to use. The case workers downloaded the mobile apps to their state cell phones and can use the swabs immediately.

D. **HSAC Committee Reports:**

By-Laws Committee – R. Horoschak stated the committee is still discussing the By-Laws and are hopeful to get through them this spring. He conveyed the By-Laws Committee is also very active working on the Housing Committee.

Planning & Integration Committee – No updates at this time.

Outreach & Communication Committee – No updates at this time.

- E. **CDHS Committee Reports:** No Report at this time.

VII. **GOALS & ACTION:** None at this time.

VIII. **PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTIONS PERIOD:**

Public comments are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes per person. Brief written comments may be submitted prior to the meeting for distribution during the meeting.

Barbara Mastrianni conveyed that the Norwescap Child and Family Resource Services is excited to provide an evening of fun and information via a virtual Books, Balls and Blocks Event. The virtual event will be held on February 16, 2022 from 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Our time together will

be full of information regarding child development, we'll share fun activities, and what you can do to track your child's development from one month to 5 1/2 years, by utilizing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3rd Edition (ASQ-3).

There will also be a guest speaker from the Snap-Ed team who will present their "Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables" MyPlate Lesson. This interactive discussion will include nutrition recommendations and how to create a healthy plate for the whole family.

A flyer will be emailed out to the council.

R. Horoschak inquired about Fisherman's Mark staff. M. O'Reilly will reach out for a staff member to attend the HSAC meetings.

J. Spencer inquired if anyone had any information about the construction at the Flemington Circle. M. O'Reilly will put J. Spencer in touch with the Hunterdon County Planning Board.

J. Cassano with the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board reported they were awarded a grant for Pathways to Recovery an employment training program for those affected by the opioid crisis in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. They will be serving 100 job seekers. More information will be forwarded. Additionally, the board is awaiting the amount of funding allocated for on-the-job training funds that have been awarded to the board as well. The agency is getting ready to apply for the 2022 Summer Youth Employment Program and are hoping to serve youth in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. They served 29 youth last summer with 14 employers and will be reaching out to the schools for interns and businesses for positions. The business representatives continue to host virtual job information events for the job seekers and there will be seven on the agenda for the remainder of January and for February. There are a few scheduled for March as well. The events have been popular with both the employers and the job seekers. All of this information can be found on the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Boards under Events.

IX.* MOTION TO ADJOURN:

S. Cohen made a motion and R. Horoschak seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m. The next meeting will be held February 23, 2022.

***= Item Requires Action**

Note to Council Members: If members are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services.