

**Substance Abuse Committee**  
**July 15, 2020**

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**Present:** Brian Hart, Erin Doyle, Lisa Willson, Nicholas Moffe, Jennifer Emery, Glenn Jarvis, Desiree Rogers

**Excused:** Linda Waite

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**Minutes:**

Approved without changes.

**Director of Community Services Report – Brian Hart**

- **State Aid Reductions – LGU being blamed - ASAPNYS:** There is an OASAS reduction and Brian has a conference call about this later today. The State said that in general there would be 20% cuts to State Aid. OASAS decided to only cut the agencies that contract with Counties. Agencies that contract directly with OASAS and not through Counties would not receive a cut. So those agencies that contract with Counties would receive a 31% cut instead of 20%. This was not well received by those agencies. ASAPNYS is blaming the County governments and wants the County governments disbanded. In Chemung County our cut is only 22.6%, as the will be giving out nothing to us for the rest of the year. For the last 6 years the State and County have gone back and forth on “under spent” money. An example is for the year 2018, the State will do a reconciliation a couple of years later and want a recoupment of the money not spent (which would be this year). Brian is trying to get that waived. The State is thinking we have must more, so they are continuing to negotiate those totals. Brian stated that he has spoken to AIM, Salvation Army, and CASA Trinity about the decision to withhold money. The recommendations from the State did not make sense.

Brian recommended that CASA Trinity take a bigger hit in the jail program, because they are not seeing as many people in this program because of the new Bail Reform that is in place. The State is using the term “withhold” instead of “cut”, because “cut” would mean a permanent reduction. By withholding to make a reduction, and then if the State receives Federal stimulus money, then money can be put back in the budget. Brian is concerned about agencies not having enough money to cover payroll in the third and fourth quarter of the year. Brian has recommended to the agencies effected that they take the total amount that is being withheld and divide it in half for the third and fourth quarter so they aren’t taking such a big cut in the fourth quarter. This all has to do with current State Aid, nothing with any cuts that may occur in future years. It will all depend on what the Federal Government is going to do with assisting States with COVID-19.

A committee member asked if the CASA Trinity worker in the jail would be gone. The answer was that the person would not be there as much, because they have already seen a huge reduction of people in jail due to the new bail reform.

- **Impact on ER Changes:** Brian asked if anyone was experiencing any changes with the closing of St. Joseph's ER. A committee member stated that they have had to redirect at least 1 to 2 people a day to the Arnot ER, and yesterday they had to redirect 4 people. These are individuals that came to St. Joseph's old ER for treatment. New Dawn does direct admissions, but individuals that come from the Arnot ER are transported to New Dawn by Erway Ambulance. Another committee member stated that they have only had one issue back when they first shut down. They have not had any sense then, but are concerned that Erway will be charging clients to transport from Arnot to services at St. Joseph's. Brian confirmed that patients will NOT be charged an Ambulance fee. With annual admissions of 800 to 900 a year, that is a lot of transports that will be done from Arnot to St. Joseph's for treatment. A committee member asked if Arnot was going to absorb St. Joseph's and Brian explained that from the State's perspective Arnot and St. Joseph's are "one" hospital. It was mentioned that Arnot's 5 year plan is to move the BSU and ARU from St. Joseph's to a building next to Arnot. The first phase is to renovate Arnot's ER and the second phase is to move the BSU and ARU to the Arnot campus. The St. Joseph ER closure was moved up due to COVID-19 and no one showing up in the ER.
- **Travel Advisory Impact?:** Brian asked if anyone experiencing any changes with the State Travel Advisory. Brian stated that he has encountered one agency that states all of their staff are essential and can travel anywhere. He said the State Police feel the same way. There are some who are trying to figure out the guidelines and what to do.

An example is: If you were in the State of New Hampshire and came back Sunday, but on Wednesday they were added to the Travel Advisory list you would not have to serve the remainder of the time under quarantine. Brian said the opposite just happened here in the County. An employee went to Delaware and it was restricted, but then came back and now Delaware is off the list. They still have to quarantine, because they went to the State when it was on the list. The second piece to all of this is they have to use their own benefit time for quarantine.

A committee member stating they are having staffing issues with vacations that are planned in these States that are on the list. They are not canceling their trips and staff are off for a week of vacation, then off for 2 more weeks for quarantine. It is very frustrating for operational needs as there is a need for these prescribers. Brian said that maybe they should think about denying staff's requests for vacations due to operational needs.

In the Drug Courts it was announced that if you go to one of the States on the list for vacation, then the 2 week quarantine will be coming out of the staff person's vacation time. If they don't have any vacation time left, then they don't get paid for it.

If the person on quarantine has a COVID-19 test done during their quarantine and it comes back negative, they still have to quarantine due to the 14 day incubation period.

In Drug Court they are use to testing in groups, but due to COVID-19 they do one person at a time. They stand behind the plexi-glass and they watch the individual test themselves, and then the individual wipes everything down when they are done. There are no in-person check-in's, they can't travel to Schuyler County. Virtual appearances will continue until at least September, if not to the end of the year. Went to an AA Meeting and was very impressed how they had everyone wipe down their own area and chairs they sat in when the meeting was done.

Brian stated that at the DSS/HRC building for awhile the Management Team would greet staff as they entered in the morning by holding the main entrance doors open so there was less contact with the doors. Everyone in the building is required to wear a mask in the hallways, bathrooms, and if they leave their desk to use the copier. We do keep our office doors open, and when using meeting rooms everyone wipes down their own area (table/chair/etc) when the meetings are done.

### **Sharing by Community Members**

- **Our House** – Lisa Willson will be retiring and her last day will be July 31, 2020. **SHE WILL BE MISSED!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**The next meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2020 in-person at the DSS/HRC Building.**