

NYPWA All Commissioners' Meeting Summary

February 23, 2023

Sarah Merrick, NYPWA President

NYPWA President Sarah Merrick and Executive Director Paul Brady opened February's virtual All Commissioners' Meeting by welcoming everyone and extending a heartfelt farewell, congratulations, and thank you to HRA Commissioner Gary Jenkins who shared that he is moving on to new professional adventures! Commissioner Jenkins last day is March 3, at which time HRA First Deputy Commissioner Molly Park (PARKM@dhs.nyc.gov) will become acting commissioner. Welcome Molly...the Association is at your service!

State Budget News—Medicaid/eFMAP

- The NYPWA submitted written testimony to both the Joint Legislative Budget Committees on Human Services and on Health/Medicaid
 - Both testimonies are attached to the meeting summary email
- Executive Budget [proposal](#) seeks to assume the entire enhanced Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) savings that had been share with localities—an unexpected financial hit to counties the Executive conservatively estimates at \$624 million
 - Many county legislatures are passing local resolutions against the proposal—[click here](#) for a NYSAC-crafted sample resolution or [here](#) for the estimated county impact of the eFMAP change
- Budget Hearings conclude March 1—followed by the introduction of alternative budget plans from the Assembly and Senate as lawmakers in early March, jumpstarting budget negotiations leading up to the April 1 deadline

Temporary Assistance/Housing/SNAP

Code Blue

- Code Blue (with no eligibility requirements) has increased the demand, created provider labor shortages, and reduced the supply of available housing options for families and single adults

Safe Options Support (SOS) Program

- Commissioners mentioned the availability funding through a Safe Options Support (SOS) program. According to OMH, the agency is “soliciting applications for funding to support 8 [SOS Critical Team Intervention \(CTI\) Teams](#) to operate in regions outside of New York City. SOS CTI Teams will use an evidence-based CTI approach to provide intensive outreach, engagement, and care coordination services to individuals experiencing street homelessness and those in temporary shelter settings.” NOTE: **Request for Proposals are due by 3/2/23.**

OTDA Security Services in Hotel Questionnaire

- The OTDA questionnaire emailed to Commissioners (January 31, 2023) resulted in a follow-up conversation between NYPWA and Cheryl Contento regarding concerns over its intent. Specifically, it was mentioned that counties are already in a difficult position with hotels
- If the information sought from the questionnaire was going to be used to mandate the inclusion of security services, this would jeopardize what is already a precarious relationship and could further reduce what limited resources there are to house the homeless
- We were told that was not the reason the survey went out—but was attributed to conversations that took place at the Winter Conference and that the State wanted to better understand which hotels offered security and how the services are being provided

OTDA Draft ADM—Operating Budgets/Per Diem Rates for Shelters and Hotels/Motels

- OTDA is seeking comment on a proposed ADM (emailed to Commissioners on February 23) related to the submission of operating budgets and associated per diem rates for shelters and hotels/motels
- Comments are due by March 3
- The NYPWA emailed a draft response to Commissioners as a resource on February 24—and attached to the meeting summary email

Temporary Assistance/Drug-Alcohol Sanctions

- OTDA Commissioner Tietz reaffirmed his support for lifting such sanctions during the Winter Conference, but offered no specifics or timing of such a change
- In November, NYPWA sent a letter to Commissioner Tietz on several issues coming out of the Fall Commissioner Convening—including the sanction issue. Below is NYPWA’s initial request for clarification, followed by Commissioner Tietz’s response from late December:
 - NYPWA: “**Substance Abuse and Sanctions**: This was a spirited discussion. Commissioners would welcome the opportunity to delve into the details of what is being proposed so that they can provide a more useful review and comments. A written draft would be most helpful as people left the meeting without knowing what was being proposed for consideration. It is possible that new ideas could emerge which we would all view as valuable.”
 - OTDA: “**Substance Abuse and Sanctions**: OTDA is still considering changes to substance abuse screening and related sanctions policy. We are concerned the current policy is depriving individuals of basic support vital to their recovery. Proposed changes will be shared at the appropriate time.”

Medicaid

- Our resident Medicaid guru from Greene County recommended attention be given to the following recent DOH guidance directives:
 - [GIS 23 MA/03](#): Unwind of the Medicaid Continuous Coverage Requirement Related to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and Processing Cases Under Regular Rules

- [GIS 23 MA/04](#): Medicare Buy-In for Individuals Transitioning from Local Districts to NYSOH
- [23 OHIP/ADM-01](#): New York Independent Assessor for Personal Care (PCS) and Consumer Directed Personal Care Services (CDPAS)

Children Services

Child Care

- OCFS continues to pressure districts to use their child care dollars—but a lack of providers persists across the state
- The state is re-convening the Child Care Taskforce (next meeting scheduled for March 13)—and are seeking additional members

Universal Assessments of Families

- NYC-ACS recently met with OCFS regarding a change in child welfare practice related to universal assessments of families that focuses on their strengths/needs
- OCFS is focused on delivering ‘training the trainers’, updating NYS curricula, and educating the field throughout 2023
- ACS shared information they received regarding this issue, which NYPWA emailed to Commissioners on February 24

Recruitment and Retention Efforts-HELP

- Counties are beginning to conduct local public hearings in response to the Hiring Emergency Limited Placement (HELP) Program
- HELP is the NYS Department of Civil Service response to help enable temporary non-competitive designations on certain hard-to-fill critical health and safety district titles
- Earlier this month, Monroe County announced an agreement to increase the county’s recruitment and retention incentive for current and future employees—[click here](#) to read the full county press release
- Monroe County also recently held open interview events for those looking to become CPS caseworkers—and has created a dedicated [caseworker website](#) describing the position, salary/benefit information, promotional opportunities, application information and available training/support

The Summer Conference is Only Months Away...Planning Starts Now!

- Its never too early to think about sessions you or your staff may want to propose for the Summer Conference (July 16-19)
- Sessions from local districts are the most sought after and impactful!
- Topics to consider: workforce recruitment challenges and success stories; housing strategies; fair hearings; pivotal conversations (very popular at the Winter Conference); more?!?!)
- Send us your ideas: [Request for Proposals](#)