

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**June 21, 2022**

Present: Lisa Virkler, Chair; Richard Chartrand and Jeffrey Nellenback. Legislator Andrea Moroughan had been excused.

Others: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Tom Osborne, Josh Leviker, Phil Hathway, and Ian Gilbert; County Manager Ryan Piche; County Attorney Joan McNichol; Treasurer Eric Virkler; Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith; and Information Technology Director Conner Biolsi.

Committee Chair Legislator Virkler called the meeting to order at 2:56 p.m.

Legislator Nellenback made a motion to accept the minutes from May 17, 2022 as recorded, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

**Update on the Medication Assisted Treatment (M.A.T.) Program in the Jail and Opioid Settlement Funds – Patricia Fralick, Community Services Director**

Pat Fralick began by giving some background on how this program was started. “Overdose is a common, yet preventable, cause of death following release from incarceration. Investing in alternatives to incarceration and providing continuous, coordinated care to those who are incarcerated – particularly those with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders – will not only reduce overdose deaths but also improve public health and improve public safety and reduce healthcare and criminal justice system costs”. In the fall of 2021, Governor Hochul signed legislation requiring NYS correctional facilities and county jails to offer Medication Assisted Treatment to incarcerated individuals with Opioid Use Disorders (OUD).

The state mandated M.A.T. programming because a study showed 75% of re-entrants (diagnosed with OUD) and not connected to MOUD; relapsed to opioid use within 3 months of release. 40% to 50% of the re-entrants with OUD are arrested for a new crime within a year after release. Re-entrants with OUD are 20 to 40 times more likely to have a fatal opioid overdose compared to the general public, especially within a few weeks post release. The first two weeks following from incarceration are associated with a 129-fold increase in overdose risk relative to the general population.

Essentially this is a mini opioid treatment program (OTP) within the jail system. This addition to correctional and mental hygiene law is putting an OTP in the jail. Each inmate that enters the jail system will be screened for program eligibility and offered the program, which can start anytime while in jail. Counseling staff will provide clinical services. Discharge planning will be done to support the inmate when released.

M.A.T. Program Components are medication; group and individual counseling; peer support; discharge planning; and re-entry and transitional supports. Three common M.A.T. medications are Buprenorphine, which requires special training to administer, and is mostly used as a bi-layered film that adheres to the inside of someone's cheek and dissolves within 15 to 20 minutes; Vivitrol, which is not popular with inmates because of how long lasting it is, is a shot and is incredibly costly; Methodone, which requires certain procedures for administering it, is a liquid that needs to be drank daily. Methodone requires someone to watch carefully that the inmate drinks it and doesn't cheek it. Inmates will need to be tested regularly to make sure the medication is in their system. There was further discussion on how the medications worked.

Credo is looking into a mobile vehicle or a satellite office to distribute medications. Any of these medications require training and certain requirements due to the different aspects of each. Medication Administration requires that medication is distributed seven days a week; administered by a nurse (LPN or RN); jail staff ensure medication isn't "cheeked"; there are specific steps performed by the nurse to administer the medication; and the inmate who has been given buprenorphine must sit and be observed by the staff for 15 to 20 minutes.

Currently information is being gathered from others (Department of Corrections, treatment agencies, and other jails) for the development of policies and procedures for the jail. The next step is to develop and issue an RFP to solicit an agency to provide the medications and the clinical program in the jail with an expected start date of October 7, 2022. There was discussion on who does the eligibility screening, pointing out that not many people want this type of position. A nurse on call could be used for weekends and holidays. Legislator Virkler pointed out that ultimately at the end of the day this will help inmates with mental health and OUD to be able to re-enter society and be successful. There was further discussion about the staffing issues.

This program will cost well over the \$64,000.00 that Credo gets from the state, but this will cost well over \$100,000.00 based on the services, medication costs, full-time nurse position and additional Correction Officers. Currently there would be roughly 6 inmates that would be eligible for this program.

Opiate Settlement Funds background is that Lewis County joined a class action suit against pharmaceutical companies in 2020. Opioid lawsuits allege opioid manufacturers caused the opioid crisis through deceptive marketing practices, misrepresenting the opioids had a low risk of addiction and touting benefits without disclosing the medications risks. Several drug makers and distributors have agreed to billions in settlements. Over the next 16 years the county will receive roughly \$872,795.40 or \$54,549.71 per year.

In 2022 the county will receive "accelerated" payments and also one-time payments from other pharmaceutical companies. The amounts and timing are the

“best estimate” of the law firms and may change due to costs and fees associated with the settlement fund and may result in a small reduction in the payments. The funds are categorized as restricted or unrestricted. Restricted funds must be used as outlined in the guidance documents. NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) will distribute the state abatement funds. The estimate of funds the county can expect in 2022 is \$212,747.50, which we started received in April. After the accelerated payment, the county will receive the balance in 15 annual payments beginning in 2023 for a total of \$271,249 which means the annual payment will range from \$12,177 to \$17,926.

The Janssen Settlement, after receiving the accelerated payments, should be 6 annual payments beginning in 2025 for a total of \$62,342.04 or annual payments of \$2,291.42 to \$2,969.60. The State Abatement Fund is being distributed by NYS OASAS but waiting on guidance of when and how this will be distributed. This funding must be for approved programming and is an estimated total payment of \$447,878 over the next 16 years.

Restricted funds must be used as outlined in the Schedule C approved uses which include: OUD treatment; support for people in treatment/recovery; connection to care; needs of the criminal justice pregnant persons; OUD/overdose prevention; prevention and misuse of opioids; and other strategies. Unrestricted funds can be used anyway we want. There is quite a lot of Federal money available for activities related to opioid interventions currently and indications show that this will continue for a year or two. The Columbia University study will be wrapping up in 2023. The project management staff is looking at the successes of initiatives implemented and the sustainability of options now. The Drug-Free Community Grant is ending in September 2022 and was not approved for round 2. OASAS has not issued guidance as to how the county can access the abatement funds. There will be opportunities to apply for additional dollars per the law firm. These are all things to consider for planning purposes.

Projects that are currently in place are reducing stigma using media campaigns and activities in our county; increasing waived clinical staff for the prescribing of suboxone; providing opportunities for residents to dispose of prescriptions; Care Manager in the hospital ER; M.A.T. in the jail; and increase utilization of peers.

Legislator Virkler briefly discussed the Pleasant Night Inn media attention. Lewis County Social Services does place individuals there. Social Services has used this facility for many years according to Jenny Jones, Social Services Commissioner. She reminded everyone that not every sex offender is a pedophile. This location worked wonderfully because they were on the Lewis County Public Transit service to get back and forth to appointments. Now Social Services is looking into the Rome and Utica area for options or possible Syracuse. This means longer trips for her staff to drop individuals off. On call staff could be needed in the middle of the night. This will need to be researched more and new procedures for staff put in place.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Authorizing Agreement between Lewis County Community Services and Children's Home of Jefferson County for Licensed Psychologists and/or Psychiatrists Services in CPL 730 and MHL §9.60 (AOT) Cases from July 6, 2022 through December 31, 2023, for a cost not to exceed \$750.00 per case unless otherwise agreed upon.  
AYE   3        NAY   0
  
2. Amending Compensation Plan with reference to the Lewis County General Hospital to Create Two (2) Full-time Clerk positions at a salary range of \$13.86 to \$18.05 per hour, and Three (3) Part-time Nursing Assistant positions at a salary range of \$13.98 to \$18.36 per hour.  
AYE   3        NAY   0
  
3. Authorizing Agreement between Lewis County Office For the Aging and Consumer Directed Choices for the purpose of Consumer Directed In-Home Services under EISEP and CSE from August 1, 2022 through July 31, 2023 at the cost of \$27.00 per hour.  
AYE   3        NAY   0
  
4. Authorizing Agreements between Lewis County Public Health Agency and Independent Registered Nurses and/or LPN's for Pre-K Special Education Services from July 1, 2022 until terminated by either party at a not to exceed amount of \$72.00 per hour.  
AYE   3        NAY   0
  
5. Authorizing Agreement between Lewis County Public Health Agency and OCV, LLC as Host of THEPUBLICHEALTHAPP.COM for a cost not to exceed \$26,378.00 for development, premier marketing kit, and three years support and maintenance services.  
AYE   3        NAY   0
  
6. Amending Compensation Plan with reference to the Department of Social Services to Create One (1) Temporary Social Services Program Examiner position at Grade 20 with a salary range of \$20.02 to \$23.53 per hour to assist with HEAP.  
AYE   3        NAY   0
  
7. Authorizing Agreement between Lewis County Department of Social Services and Lewis County Office For the Aging regarding Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) from October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023 at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.00.  
AYE   3        NAY   0

8. Authorizing Agreement between Lewis County Department of Social Services and Northeast Parent & Child Society from July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023 at a cost not to exceed the Maximum Aid Rate established by the State for the provision of foster care services.

AYE   3          NAY   0  

9. Authorizing Renewal Agreement between Department of Social Services and North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Inc. from September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2024 at various session costs to provide rehabilitative and supportive services to families in accordance with criteria established by Department Regulations.

AYE   3          NAY   0  

10. Authorizing Agreement between the Lewis County Department of Social Services and Pratt Northam Foundation to Serve as Administrator of the Pratt Northam – Careers Here Program retroactive to January 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023 at an administrative fee of \$10,000.00 with \$5,000.00 of the fee to be designated as a stipend to Lisa Hetzner for her management of the program.

AYE   3          NAY   0  

11. Appropriating Funds for the Careers Here and Workshipp Program at an amount of \$51,000.00 and \$4,973.00 respectively.

AYE   3          NAY   0  

12. Re-Appointing Ward Dailey and Michele Ledoux to the Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board for a term of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024.

AYE   3          NAY   0  

13. Authorizing an Inter-Municipal Agreement with Jefferson County to share Veteran Services Employee for County of Lewis for an initial period through December of 2022.

AYE   3          NAY   0  

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Community Services Director, Patricia Fralick to create and send out an RFP for required Medication Assisted Treatment (M.A.T.) programming in the Lewis County Jail as outlined in Chapter 432 of NYS Correction and Mental Hygiene Laws of NY, seconded by Legislator Nellenback and carried.

2. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Community Services Director, Patricia Fralick to create and send out an RFP for an IT solution to improve referrals as well as interagency and community communication to enhance wrap-around case management services in Lewis County, seconded by Legislator Nellenback and carried.

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Nellenback moved to adjourn at 4:14 p.m., seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board