

**MINUTES**  
**RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**January 13, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Richland County Health and Human Services Board was called to order at 10:30 a.m. on January 13, 2022 by Kerry Severson virtually via Zoom.

Members Present: Kerry Severson, Ingrid Glasbrenner, Tim Gottschall, Van Nelson, and Dr. Jerel Berres.

Others Present: Tracy Thorsen, Angie Rizner, Meghan Rohn, Stephanie Ronnfeldt, Jessica Tisdale, Briana Turk, Myranda Culver, and Jaymie Bruckner

Members Absent: Cindy Chicker.

Approve Agenda and Posting: Motion by Van Nelson, seconded by Ingrid Glasbrenner to approve the agenda and proper posting. Motion Carried.

Approve December 9, 2021 Health and Human Services Board Minutes: Motion by Ingrid Glasbrenner, seconded by Van Nelson to approve December 9, 2021 Health and Human Services Board Minutes.

Directors Report: Tracy Thorsen reported that the Leadership Team will be conducting a series of strategic annual planning meetings to identify priorities for the upcoming year. This process has been done in January and February for the past three years and provides an opportunity to reflect on the agency's status, accomplishments, strengths, needs, and set administrative objectives and goals.

The Behavioral Health Services Unit recently completed a Choices Group, an educational program utilizing the Prime for Life Curriculum, for youth who have received underage drinking tickets. It was announced that the Treatment Court Program received the grant that was applied for and will now be implementing a hybrid model, integrating a new Drug Court Program with the current Alcohol Treatment Court. All Behavioral Health Programs successfully completed the re-certification process after undergoing an extensive site-survey by the Department of Health Services Division of Quality Assurance. Tracy Thorsen noted that preparation for these survey audits is very labor intensive for both staff in the Behavioral Health Unit and the Administrative Staff that support the programs.

The year has started off very busy for the Child and Youth Services Unit with several new reports and investigations. Staff have been working diligently to meet the needs of families' despite of the current staffing shortages. Tracy Thorsen was happy to report one of the vacant Child and Youth Case Manager Positions will be filled later this month. The Family Preservation Worker, Cecilia Degenhardt, continues to provide services to families who do not meet criteria to be opened for investigations, but have been identified as being potentially at-risk.

Thankfully the Economic Support Unit is now fully staffed and new staff are working through the necessary training. The new statewide call center phone system, Genesys, is now operational and while some bugs continue to be worked out, feedback is that some workers are liking it better than the former CCA system. The unit is receiving more requests for crisis funds to pay for fuel deliveries and furnace repairs and replacements with the increasingly cold weather.

Roxanne Klubertanz-Gerber, Manager of the Aging and Disability Resource Center – Richland Center Office, was welcomed back from her medical leave. While staff managed fairly independently during her absence, the unit was grateful to have had the support of John Gothjan, Regional Aging and Disability Resource Center Director.

Health Officer Update and COVID-19 Response: Rose Kohout noted that Richland County is experiencing an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases being reported, and if the trajectory continues it could outweigh staffing capacity in a very short period of time. Alternate methods of communicating information to individuals testing positive, such as letters, emails or text messaging, is being considered, as well as the potential of triaging cases to determine individuals who are most at risk. Updated COVID-19 data was made available to the Board for review. It was also noted that every county in Wisconsin is experiencing critically high levels of COVID-19 transmission and it is becoming more and more difficult to manage for Public Health departments of all sizes.

Tim Gottschall questioned if Omicron is the dominate strain currently being seen in Richland County. He also questioned if Omicron is following the trend of being more transmissible but having a lower rate of hospitalizations and fatalities. Rose Kohout noted that to her knowledge, from the data they have where sequencing is occurring, approximately 83% of cases are represented by the Omicron variant. While some hospitalizations are still occurring, in the last week or two there has not been an uptick in reported deaths or hospitalizations.

Approval of New Medical Advisor for Richland County HHS – Public Health: Dr. Neil Bard has expressed an interest in serving as Richland County’s Medical Advisor. It is expected that Dr. Bard will offer knowledgeable, effective, and dedicated leadership in this role and his approval for the position is being recommended. It was also explained that the Public Health Office must have an active medical advisor in order to continue to provide services. As a result, Dr. Richardson has agreed to continue as the acting medical advisor until January 13, 2022 when it is expected that a successor will be approved. Motion by Dr. Jerel Berres, seconded by Kerry Severson to approve the installation of Dr. Neil Bard as the new Medical Advisor of Richland County Health and Human Services – Public Health. Motion carried.

Expenditures Report (Vouchers and Expenditures over \$2,000 but less than \$10,000): The Richland County Health and Human Services Expenditures Report for January 13, 2022 was reviewed. All of these have been approved by the County Administrator, Clinton Langreck, and payments have been prepared. The following items required additional discussion:

2021 Vouchers

Voucher #62 – Cardmember Services: This was to pay for lobby furniture for the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Voucher #50 – Cardmember Services: This was to pay for monthly payment of Kareo, the agency Electronic Health Record system.

Voucher #48 – Cardmember Services: This was to pay for cubicle extenders in Economic Support Unit.

Voucher #1-14 & #67-68 – CDW Government Inc.: This was to pay for various computer/technology related items, as well as DVD players for the Child & Youth Services Unit staff laptops.

Voucher #15 – GFC Leasing: This was to pay for the monthly copier rental fees.

Voucher #16– JCOMP Technologies: This was to pay for docking stations for staff laptops in the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Voucher #17-19 – Language Line Services: This was to pay for interpreter services and the translation of several documents.

Voucher #23-26 – Quill Corporation: This was to pay for office supplies and a large order of copy paper.

Voucher #30-36 & #69-71 – Richland Observer: This was to pay for outreach for various programs in the Aging and Disability Resource Center and recruitment for position vacancies.

Voucher #38 – Richland School District: This was Substance Abuse Prevention funds that were used to help the Richland School District purchase parent handbooks.

Voucher #42 – Wertz Plumbing & Heating: This was to pay for urinal repairs.

2022 Vouchers

Voucher #3 – Behavioral Health Training Partnership: This was to pay for the annual fee for a statewide partnership that provides Behavioral Health staff year round access to online training.

Prepaid Vouchers

Voucher #1 – Infinity Training: This was to pay for a Trauma Informed Care training and was funded by Coordinated Services Team program.

Voucher #10– Johnson Controls Fire Protection: This was to pay for a previously approved update to the fire alarm system in the Community Services building.

Voucher #11 – Strang Heating & Electric RC: This was to pay for updated cabling for security camera systems in the Community Services building.

**2021/2022 Vouchers**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>No. of Vouchers</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Richland County Health and Human Services – 2021 Expense Reports	14	\$4,572.62
Richland County Health and Human Services – 2021 Admin Vouchers	17	\$17,730.67
Richland County Health and Human Services – 2022 Admin Vouchers	3	\$1,134.00
Richland County Health and Human Services – 2021 Prepaid Vouchers	14	\$25,795.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>\$49,232.62</b>

2021 Budget Summary & Richland County Placement Report: Stephanie Ronnfeldt reviewed the 2021 budget through December, noting that expense utilization should be at 100%. The several programs were underutilized primarily due to position vacancies or underutilization of services. Building and operating costs exceeded 123%, and as explained previously this is primarily due to the bills for workman’s compensation, and insurance being applied to the Health and Human Services budget at a significantly higher cost than anticipated when the 2021 budget was created. Public Health is at 153% due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however there is additional COVID funds available to cover these additional expenses. Comprehensive Community Services is at 136% utilization, however as services increase for this program, so do revenues. The Birth to Three program also ended the year at 117% utilization due the loss of contracted services through the hospital, creating the need to pay more for services from other agencies.

When looking at both anticipated and received revenues through December, Health and Human Services revenues totaled \$7,583,457. Actual and anticipated expenses totaled \$7,444,509 before the chargeback process, leaving a balance of \$138,948. Stephanie Ronnfeldt explained that this balance also includes the Comprehensive Community Services WIMCR payment in the amount of \$107,000, and another payment from WIMCR for Crisis Services and Outpatient Mental Health Services is still expected to be received in the amount of \$63,000. Another unanticipated source of revenue was a portion of Rural Health Care funding from Medicaid that was received by the County, \$96,000 of which was allocated to Health and Human Services. After the chargeback process occurred for additional placement charges the revised balance becomes \$336,091.

Tracy Thorsen reviewed the Richland County Placement Report. There were no changes to the utilization of Crisis stabilization and year to date expenses through November totaled \$49,007. Adult Institutional and Inpatient Placement expenses decreased in November to \$18,702 and a reimbursement of \$33,162 was received bringing total year to date expenses to \$142,364. Adult Community Residential Placements decreased from 10 to 8 individuals currently in placements. Year to date expenses totaled \$387,699 bringing total expenses in Fund 54 to \$579,070 and leaving a deficit of -(\$96,792).

Expenses through November for Child Institutional Inpatient totaled \$189,329. There were no Detention placements in November and therefore expenses for the year remain at \$23,400. Year to date Group Home and Treatment Foster Care expenses totaled \$400,361 and Regular Foster Care totaled \$27,942. Total Expenses in Fund 44 through November totaled \$641,033 leaving a deficit of – (\$113,692).

The 2018 to 2021 Comparison of Monthly Placement Expenses graphic and the Comparison of Placement Expense and Budgeted Tax Levy graphic were reviewed. Generally, expenses in 2021 have been less than in 2020. If expenses for December continue as they have, it is estimated that placement costs will end the year at approximately \$1,331,022.

Expense history by individual placement types were reviewed, as well as the projected end of year cost for each. Tracy Thorsen highlighted the drastic decrease in Adult Institutional Inpatient expenses, however Adult Community Placements are trending higher. This again is due to a high cost placement that is reimbursable by the Comprehensive Community Services Program to avoid the need for an institutional placement.

Ingrid Glasbrenner inquired about the significant increase in the utilization in group homes and treatment foster homes in the last year. Tracy Thorsen explained that there have been more significant situations where regular foster homes have not been able to be utilized. In an effort to keep family groups together, when a child is in need of a higher level of care the entire family is sometimes placed together in the same placement. Jessica Tisdale added that they have also run into more situations where there is not appropriate relatives to place children with and therefore foster homes and treatment foster homes need to be utilized. There have also been a couple of youth that have utilized detention placements and have then stepped down into group home settings. She noted that this is a situation that has not occurred for several years. Ingrid Glasbrenner also inquired if there is any correlation between staffing shortages and the increase in the utilization of these services. Tracy Thorsen confirmed there most likely is a correlation and explained that more seasoned staff are typically able to make better determinations regarding levels of risk and when fully staffed there is more capacity to provide the necessary supports to families. Typically speaking, significant, long term staff result in lower placement costs.

2021 Contract Monitoring Report: Angie Rizner reviewed the 2021 Contract Monitoring Report for December and those contracts that currently exceed 92% utilization were reviewed; noting that invoicing should be through November. Angie Rizner explained that while Kareo and Chileda are reporting over 92%, they have invoiced through the month of December. The Artisian' Shop LLC is also reporting over the 92% utilization; however, this provider will not be used again. Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services-Children's is over 92% utilization and will need to be amended later on the agenda. Premier Financial Management Services is showing 111% utilization and will need to be amended next month when it is better known what amount the contract should be amended to.

Approve Contracts, Agreements, and Amendments:

<b>RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 2021 AMENDED HHS CONTRACT/AGREEMENT/MOU APPROVALS (1-13-2022)</b>		
<b>CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL OF WISCONSIN COMMUNITY SERVICES – CHILDREN’S SERVICE SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN</b>	Due to an increased need for treatment foster care and respite services provided to children being served by the Child and Youth Services Unit. (Milwaukee).  <i>This will require County Board approval.</i>	<i>Original Contract Amount: \$49,500 Amended to: \$130,000</i>  To a total amount not to exceed <b>\$155,000.</b>

Motion by, Ingrid Glasbrenner, seconded by Timothy Gottschall to approve the amended 2021 contract and forward onto the County Board for approval. Motion carried.

<b>RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 2021 AMENDED HHS CONTRACT/AGREEMENT/MOU APPROVALS (1-13-2022)</b>		
<b>CHILEDA INSTITUTE</b>	Due to an increase in their Residential Care Center daily rate for a child being served by the Child & Youth services Unit. (La Crosse).	<i>Original Contract Amount: \$230,000</i>  To a total amount not to exceed <b>\$255,000</b>

Motion by Timothy Gottschall, seconded by Dr. Jerel Berres to approve the amended 2021 contract. Motion carried.

<b>RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 2022 NEW HHS CONTRACT/AGREEMENT/MOU APPROVALS (1-13-2022)</b>		
<b>CATHOLIC CHARITIES, INC., DIOCESE OF MADISON DBA 5 DOOR RECOVERY</b>	Name change from Hope Haven-Rebos United, Inc. dba 5 Door Recovery.	
<b>COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS</b>	To provide court ordered psychosexual evaluations and treatment to children being served by the Child & Youth Services Unit. (Middleton)	For a total amount not to exceed <b>\$5,000.</b>
<b>FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES, LTD</b>	To provide supervised visitation, transportation to visitations and parenting services to families being served by the Chile & Youth Services Unit. (Westby)	For a total amount not to exceed <b>\$9,500.</b>
<b>MIRAMONT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH</b>	For provide inpatient hospitalizations or emergency detentions to individuals being served by the Behavioral Health Services Unit. (Middleton)	For a total amount not to exceed <b>\$49,500.</b>

Motion by Ingrid Glasbrenner, seconded by Van Nelson to approve the New 2022 contracts and forward those necessary onto the County Board for approval. Motion carried.

Personnel Updates: Tracy Thorsen reported the hiring of Marjorie McGraw, Child & Youth Services Case Manager, effective January 24, 2022; and Laura Radesca, Leased Service Facilitator through The Southwest Workforce Development Board, effective January 5, 2022. There were also two resignations reported, including Sonja Klang, Nutrition Site Worker, effective June 6, 2019; and Alice Lawrence-Retrum, LTE Psychiatric RN, effective December 17, 2021.

Notice was given to the board that Connie Ostrowski, Economic Support Specialist; and Crystal Adams, Economic Support Specialist; have both passed the probationary period effective January 12, 2022. A medical leave of absence with the ability to enter into a negative sick balance (per Resolution #21-12) was granted for Kelly Morman, Economic Support Specialist, effective December 2, 2021 through December 20, 2021. A medical leave of absence without pay was granted to Connie Ostrowski, Economic Support Specialist, effective January 4, 2022, through January 10, 2022.

Advertising or interviewing is occurring for the 8 vacant positions including a Secretary, Temp/Casual Driver/Escort, Comprehensive Community Services Supervisor, Adult Protective Services Worker, Adult Protective Service/Crisis Professional, Mental Health Therapist, Psychiatric RN, and a Child & Youth Services Supervisor.

Quarterly Review of Health & Human Services Organizational Chart: Angie Rizner discussed the changes that have occurred in the organizational chart since it was last reviewed. Angie Rizner also explained the color coding system and key codes. All vacancies and new hires were highlighted in each of the units as well.

Approve a Retention Incentive Plan for Health & Human Services Employees: Due to a record high 28% turnover rate in 2021, it was recognized that the agency can no longer continue to effectively deliver mandated services with the current staffing levels and action is needed to retain current staff. Staff at Health and Human Services were surveyed to obtain feedback that would be utilized in the formulation of retention incentives. It was noted that 62% of the staff participated in the survey and these results were reviewed with the Board. General takeaways from the survey were that staff want to see longevity rewarded, cost of living increases annually, more affordable health insurance that is of higher quality, bonuses are nice but the benefit is short lived, and vacation time needs to be more comparable to other employers.

An overview was provided of the current pay plan, the original observations and recommendations presented from Carlson Dettmann in 2018, and a review of the actions already taken by the County for retention and recruitment at Pine Valley in 2021. It was noted that changes were made to the Pine Valley pay plan to provide step advancement on the wage scale, and premium pay was provided to all Pine Valley employees.

Tracy Thorsen provided a presentation that offered several incentive options for recruitment and retention, as well as the financial impact and potential funding sources for each option. Tracy Thorsen reviewed in more detail three options for retention incentives, including retention bonuses, premium pay, and the establishment of a step advancement policy for the wage scale. The first of these options would be providing Health and Human Services staff with a retention bonus based on either longevity or full-time/part-time status. The details, advantages and disadvantages of both of these options were reviewed, as well as the cost of each. Due to the large impact to administrative staff to implement this option, and the concern that the impact of the incentive would not have a lasting impact on staff, Tracy Thorsen noted that this would not be a recommended incentive at this time.

The option to provide Premium Pay at the rate of \$1 per hour to all Health and Human Services staff beginning the first pay period in February was then discussed. This option would function as both a retention and recruitment incentive with a total cost of \$130,643, and would be on a limited term basis. Similar to a bonus, this would only have a onetime impact to the budget, however the impact on staff would be felt over a period of time. Wage step advancement was also discussed and two methods options were reviewed to accomplish this. Option one moves all employees up one step at a cost of \$101,815. Option two would be the creation of a Longevity Step Advancement Plan that would allow advancement along the full wage scale. Staff would be placed on the designated step based on their continued years of employment, and advancement would occur at probation, two, four six, eight, and ten years. The cost of this option would be approximately \$122,577.

Funding for each of the retention incentives was reviewed. By utilizing savings from position vacancies, claimable federal funding, and ARPA funds, all three incentives would be fully funded. After reviewing all of the options Tracy Thorsen explained it was her recommendation that annual cost of living adjustments continue to be made to the current wage scale, the proposed Longevity Step Advancement Plan be created based upon years of employment, Department Heads be allowed to place employees up to step 5, and the County Administrator has the ability to approve placements above step 5.

It was acknowledged that the establishment of a Longevity Step Advancement Plan could take a substantial amount of time, therefore in the meantime, it was also recommended that Premium Pay at the rate of \$1 per hour be provided to all Health and Human Services staff beginning the first pay period in February, and premium pay would remain in place until a Longevity Step Advancement Plan is in place or until December 31, 2022.

Ingrid Glasbrenner questioned what action the Health and Human Services Board has the ability to take if any. Tracy Thorsen clarified that any plan this board approves would also need to go through the other committees to be approved. The utilization of ARPA funds was reviewed and it was explained that Richland County received \$3,350,999 in ARPA funding from the Federal Government, 10% of which was earmarked for premium pay for eligible essential workers and it has been determined that all government employees have been identified as essential workers. Tracy Thorsen noted that an additional 10% of the AARPA money was earmarked for Public Health, however other funding has been being provided for much of the work being done during the pandemic and it is anticipated not all of those funds will be needed. Rose Kohout added that there has been discussion regarding utilized some of the ARPA funds for the promotion of Public Health workforce and infrastructure which has been underfunded for years, and therefore this must also still be advocated for. Rose Kohout also emphasized that when Pine Valley's request was approved, the availability of funding for all essential workers should have been considered at that time, as well now that a precedent has been set.

Tim Gottschall explained that he is not in favor of creating separate wage scales for separate departments, however in the current climate, it has to be acknowledged that there are special considerations that must be taken into account for health care workers, and that includes Health and Human Services. Studies have shown that the next three months are going to be crucial as "the great resignation" continues, and many people are leaving this sector with no plans to return. Tim Gottschall added that as a result of this, it would be appropriate to consider a wage scale for Health and Human Services that acknowledges that, but would like to see the County do something as a whole to prevent any disparity. Tim Gottschall also discussed the idea of a commitment bonus that would be awarded to employees in exchange for a commitment to remain employed with the County for a period of time.

Motion by Timothy Gottschall, seconded by Ingrid Glasbrenner to approve providing \$1/hr premium pay to employee wages beginning the first pay period in February and ending December 31, 2022 and forward this proposal on to the Finance and Personnel Committee, the County Administrator, and the County Board. Ingrid Glasbrenner noted that she would like Tracy Thorsen to discuss the possible of use of the 10% allocation of AARPA funds for Public Health when presenting this to the Finance and Personnel Committee. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Dr. Jerel Berres, seconded by Van Nelson to recommend that the Finance and Personnel Committee develop and adopt a comprehensive plan that includes annually making cost of living updates to the wage scale, outlining a wage step advancement plan for county employees based on longevity, and authorizing the Department Head to place employees up to step 5 with County Administrator authorized to approve higher placements. Ingrid Glasbrenner noted it is important that the background information that was provided here and the crisis facing health care staff need to be provided, as well when this is presented to the Finance and Personnel Committee. **Motion carried.**

Adjourn: The next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2022 at 10:30 a.m. and will be held via Zoom. Motion by Kerry Severson, seconded by Ingrid Glasbrenner to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Meghan Rohn  
Confidential Administrative Secretary