

Health, Social, Educational & Environmental Committee Meeting
Held in Room 318
Putnam County Office Building
Carmel, New York 10512

(Chairman Oliverio, Legislators Othmer & Tamagna)

Thursday February 16, 2012 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman Oliverio who requested that Legislator Othmer lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Othmer and Tamagna and Chairman Oliverio were present.

Item #4 – Update/Pro-Act Prescription Card/Erison Rodriguez was called first. Chairman Oliverio stated that since this has been discussed, he has received so many phone calls from residents inquiring about the program and asking when it would be available. He wanted to make sure that there was adequate publicity to make the public aware of this service.

Mr. Erison Rodriguez, the Program Manager for Pro-Act, stated that everything is in place to bring the card to Putnam County residents. Media attention will help advertise its availability. It is only for uninsured and under-insured residents. It is for people who pay out of pocket and full cash price. Residents who already have prescription coverage would not be eligible to use the card. There is no cost to the County or participants. The program is funded by the more or less twenty-five pharmacies in Putnam County. Currently there are only four which do not participate but they have been offered the opportunity to join. The cards will arrive via mail already activated and ready to use. There is no enrollment required.

Legislator Othmer questioned if senior citizens can use the card.

Legislator Tamagna stated that residents are only eligible if they have no drug coverage. Seniors do have that coverage through a Medicare program.

Chairman Oliverio stated that there are many residents that do not have prescription coverage tied to their health benefits.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the card can be used for pet medication, as long as it is a medication that would be prescribed for humans.

Ms. Doreen Crane from the Office for Aging questioned if it were credible coverage for Medicare Part D.

Legislator Tamagna stated that the County would do an outreach to seniors in the County to alert them to the fact that they are already covered.

Chairman Oliverio stated that in his opinion, the age group 25 to 35 will be the biggest users because so many do not have health coverage and they are no longer eligible under their parents' coverage.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that since this program is endorsed by the County, we must make sure that adequate information is out there and there are no misunderstandings, especially by seniors. We must do our due diligence. There seems to be some concerns that this may be problematic.

Ms. Rebecca Wittenberg, Acting Director of Health, stated that seniors would be better if they had to make a phone call to better understand the coverage. She suggested an educational piece at all the local pharmacies to alert them regarding Medicare Part D.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that residents must use caution as consumers.

Acting Director Wittenberg stated that local pharmacies are very responsible and responsive. They may be able to communicate to the seniors.

Chairman Oliverio requested that the Health Department send out a "Blast Fax" to all the local pharmacies explaining the situation and requesting their assistance.

Chief of Staff Simone stated that there can also be an explanation given at the upcoming Press Conference. There would also be information given at all the County's Senior Centers.

Chairman Oliverio stated that since there will be several thousand spare cards, one department in the County should hold them.

Commissioner of Social Services/Mental Health Piazza stated that the Department of Social Services was the logical place to keep some of the cards since they get so many clients that may be in need of such a service.

Legislator Tamagna stated that at the next County Executive's PLAN meeting with Department Heads, they could decide which departments will keep the extra cards.

Acting Director of Health Wittenberg questioned if a person had to be a documented resident to use the card.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the program and the cards are completely anonymous.

Chairman Oliverio thanked Mr. Rodriguez for attending the meeting and for all his efforts. He requested that the County Executive's office schedule a news conference as soon as possible.

Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – January 10, 2012. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #5 – Correspondence/NYEIS Software/FYI was duly noted.

There being no further business, at 6:55 P.M., Legislator Tamagna made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Othmer. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Marrone, Clerk.