

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 13, 2008

4:00 PM

Conference Room I

Committee on Health & Human Services

*Mike Finnerty, Chair; Joan Cleary, Jim Ellenbogen, Bob Macey, Nick Futules,
Chuck McCullough, and William Robinson - Members*

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Dr. Bruce Dixon, Director, Health Department

Ramon Rustin, Warden

Dana Phillips, Chief Operating Officer - Allegheny Correctional Health Service, Inc.

Loren Roth, MD, Associate Vice Chancellor & Chief Medical Officer - UPMC or designee

Connie Cibrone, President, Allegheny General Hospital or designee

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Derek Uber for Mr. Flynn, Dr. Dixon, Warden Rustin, and Ms. Phillips*

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio and Jared Barker

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Joan Cleary, Nick Futules, Bob Macey, William Robinson, Chair Michael Finnerty, and Council Member Matt Drozd
Absent: Charles McCullough
Non-Member: Jim Ellenbogen

III. Approval of Minutes

3742-08 Motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2008 Health & Human Services Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Robinson, seconded by Cleary, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

3735-08 An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 2, entitled "County Government Operations," Chapter 205, entitled "Allegheny County Jail," through the creation of a new Article II, entitled "Prisoner Healthcare Cost Control," in order to establish uniform County policies for the cost of providing healthcare to inmates at the Allegheny County Jail.

Sponsors: Michael Finnerty, Matt Drozd, Vince Gastgeb, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, William Russell Robinson, Jan Rea, Rich Fitzgerald, Bob Macey, Nick Futules, Jim Ellenbogen, Brenda Frazier and Chuck McCullough

Summary: *The Chair provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the bill would mandate that the County could not execute any new contracts for the provision of*

prisoner health care services in which a rate exceeding the Medicaid rate for such services is authorized. He asked Ms. Phillips to explain to the committee the functions of Allegheny Correctional Health Services, Inc. Ms. Phillips explained that the service was started by the County Health Department to improve the quality of health care at the jail. She said it was created as a charitable non profit entity for that purpose.

The Chair asked her to explain how funding is obtained. Ms. Phillips said that they provide the services and bill the County and the County reimburses them. She said that they do have a budget but that the budget changes to reflect the number of prisoners. She said that some of the reimbursements regarding mental health and substance abuse issues are provided by the County's Human Services Department. Ms. Phillips explained the funding process in detail.

The Chair asked Ms. Phillips if she knew the number of inmates that are treated. She said she didn't know off hand but Dr. Dixon said about 1000. He said that off premises medical care is included. The Chair asked if he could be provided with the data regarding the treatment of inmates. Ms. Phillips said that she would provide that to him.

Ms. Phillips said that they have approximately 112 full and part time employees. She described the various job functions to the committee.

Mr. Macey asked her to describe the functions and duties of the service. Ms. Phillips provided that information to the committee. Mr. Rustin also provided this information.

The Chair asked Dr. Dixon if he had any suggestions as to how to bring the cost of providing health care to prisoners down. He said that he would encourage Council Members to implore the State delegation in Harrisburg. He also said that they are meeting with local hospitals to see if they would provide some concessions. The Chair asked how much it cost to provide this service. Dr. Dixon said approximately 4 million dollars. He said that if they had Medicaid rates they would save around 1.5 million dollars.

Ms. Cleary asked about the rate for drugs provided to the inmates. Dr. Dixon said that they have the best rate that is possible and have not found any other rates to be cheaper. Dr. Dixon and Ms. Cleary discussed the method in which drugs are dispersed.

Mr. Futules asked if any inmates ever have their own health care. Ms. Phillips said that some do but most do not.

The Chair said that the main focus of the bill is to try to get Medicaid rates. Dr. Dixon reiterated that the greatest likelihood for that to happen would be to change state law and to ask hospitals to grant some concessions.

The Chair said that he would hold the bill and try to arrange some type of meeting with state legislators and hospital administrators.

Action: **Held in Committee**

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM*