****

**Executive Director’s Report to the Board**

**August 5, 2020**

**Current Program Updates**

**CARTS**

CARTS continues to provide fewer transports to fewer people, though more recently we are beginning to see a bit of a rebound. The following charts depict the trends:

On the revenue side, our year-over-year losses (that is, the sum of our variances for the same time frame last year) in earned income from Medicaid through the week of July 17th are currently estimated at $44,193.

On the expense side, our vehicle fuel costs, drivers’ wages, and program management staff wages are somewhat reduced—about $22,500 less than at this time last year.

**State Contracts**

With regard to how the state is managing our three cost-reimbursement contracts, there’s quite a bit of variation:

**RHN--**At this time, we have not received reimbursement for our 1st quarter (Jan-March) voucher in the amount of $40,073; our second quarter (April-June) voucher, in the amount of $32,215, was submitted on July 30th. We do not know when payment for either voucher will be received. Additionally, we have not been provided with guidance regarding the 31% cut to this program that passed in the state budget in April, or any additional cuts that may be made.

**Tobacco-Free Action--**The last Tobacco Program voucher to be reimbursed was for the month of February; the Bureau of Tobacco Control has signaled that we should also expect reimbursement of our March voucher. The start date for the next contract period is July 1, 2020, but we have not been invited to submit a budget or work plan as yet. We have, however, been asked to plan for a reduction of some amount, estimated at 20%.

**Navigator--**Interestingly, the Navigator Program has remained fairly current, reimbursing vouchers, in their entirety, through May. We were also invited to submit a budget for the entire award amount, though that certainly does not preclude a cut later.

One thing that *has* been uniformly applied is the suspension, through an Executive Order currently scheduled to expire August 5th (we’re watching for a renewal), of prompt contracting and payment rules, which, among other things, absolves the State of paying interest on late payments.

We have also been told that all entities that receive state money are now subject to a 20% withholding on payments under $500,000 for vouchers for a performance period of April 1st onward (payments on vouchers under $500,000 for a performance period through March 31st are expected to be reimbursed in full). It is not certain when or even if the 20% withholding will be paid.

The withholding is not to be confused with a budget cut. At this point, although budget cuts are anticipated, the amounts of the cut for each contract is yet to be determined. Clearly, the Governor’s and Budget Office are waiting to make these determinations until the impasse in Congress is resolved and states know what help, if any, will be coming from the federal government. However, we have also heard that determinations about contract cuts will be made in August, regardless of federal (in)action.

**Other contracts**

We were invited to submit a budget to the Columbia County Office for the Aging (CCOFA) for NYConnects in the usual award amount, $147,911, for the project period beginning 4/1/20 and ending 3/31/21. CCOFA has since passed it along to NYSOFA and we are awaiting approval.

**Personnel Updates**

**Staffing changes**

* Kelly McGiffert, who was a full-time employee who served as a NYConnects Information and Assistance Specialist, an ICAN counselor and the coordinator of the Helpers for Health Project, submitted her resignation effective August 7th to take a full-time housekeeping position at the Hawthorne Valley School. Kelly cited higher pay and the security of her new position as her reasons for leaving.
* Marcy Wolfe, the Transportation Program Coordinator who was laid off effective April 3rd was reinstated at her previous rate of pay and schedule on July 13th. We are delighted to have her return.
* Mark French was hired as a driver and began work on July 22, 2020.
* At this time, we have 32 active employees, with 31 receiving a paycheck on August 6th

**COVID-19 among staff**

Late in the day on Wednesday, July 29th, we were notified by a driver for CARTS that he had tested positive for the COVID-19 virus (as per the agency’s policy regarding the privacy of staff and their medical conditions, the identity of this driver will not be shared).  Here’s what we know:

* Our colleague has been and continues to be asymptomatic
* He pursued getting a test at the walk-up clinic organized by the Columbia County Department of Health (CCDOH) on Tuesday, July 28th. He was motivated by curiosity/caution, not the presence of symptoms or a known contact
* He last worked on Tuesday, July 28th
* He was masked during all transports, as were his clients. He was also masked while at 610 when not socially distanced.  He did not come to the office at 325.
* The vehicle was thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between transports and following the last transport of the day
* The vehicle that was used for these transports was not used on Wednesday.  While this is not required, we also removed it from the rotation on Thursday and Friday as well
* The office at 610 has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected on multiple occasions since our colleague’s presence there
* As a result of receiving a positive test result, he will quarantine at home through 8/5
* The following day, we supplied staff at CCDOH with the names and contact information for the 10 or so clients this driver had transported on Friday, July 24th and Tuesday, July 28th; we also supplied the staff/visitor log from the office at 610. All of the clients were placed on mandatory quarantine. However, any client on mandatory quarantine who has an essential healthcare appointment, such as dialysis, will continue to be transported.
* We are hopeful that the combination of these factors make the likelihood of transmission between staff and transportation clients low. Nevertheless, we encouraged staff, as we have before, to take advantage of the opportunities for testing, including the CCDOH’s walk-up and drive-up clinics (clearly, periodic testing to simply explore the possibility of infection is a good idea) and we also reinforced the masking, social distancing, and hygiene precautions in memos to all.

As a result of the driver’s positive test result, there were a number of decisions we found ourselves making “on the fly” last week, which pointed to the need to revise our guidelines for transportation program staff. That was accomplished on Monday of this week.

**Other items of interest**

* I continue to participate in a coalition convened by the New York Council of Nonprofits (NYCON), which has, as its goal, advocacy with the state for the preservation of the not-for-profit sector through prompt payment and contracting
* The Foundation for Community Health (FCH) has contracted with NYCON to provide technical assistance to its grantees through the end of the calendar year. We may take advantage of counseling related to personnel matters and policy, as well as the Paycheck Protection Program.