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

**June 3, 2020**

**Current Program Updates**

All programs/services continue to operate, albeit in a different way.

**CARTS**

CARTS service delivery, in particular, has been significantly reduced.  Between 3/16 and 5/29, completed rides were 59% fewer and unique riders were 50% fewer than in the same period last year; in short, we are transporting significantly fewer people and completing significantly fewer rides. This is particularly striking in Medicaid service delivery, for which the reduction in rides and riders is 83% and 50%, respectively. Our year-over-year losses in Medicaid revenue for the same period are currently estimated at $28,885 (that is, the sum of our variances for the same time frame last year). We had some good weeks in the first quarter that help offset that a bit, but we’re still about $26K behind our earned income from Medicaid at this time last year.

On the expense side, our vehicle fuel costs, drivers’ wages, and program management staff wages are somewhat reduced—about $14K less than at this time last year--which helps to offset the revenue loss. A $15,000 grant from the Berkshire-Taconic Foundation that we received nearly a month ago will also be helpful.

**RHN**

By way of reminder, the State Budget passed on April 3rd pooled two rural health programs together, the Rural Health Network (RHN) program and the Rural Health (Hospital) Access (RHA) program. Total allocation is $9,410,000, which represents a 31% cut from the combined allocations for these two programs from the 2019-20 budget. Meanwhile, there was a second allocation of $1,100,000 through a Senate Appropriation which will also be split between RHN and RHA programs. We continue to await guidance from the Office of Rural Health about how we must modify our current program year budget (that is, Jan-Dec 2020) to reflect this cut.

**Navigator and Tobacco**

It has also been suggested that there will be additional cuts to our other state contracts, but no detail about that has been shared. In the interim, we are limiting certain discretionary expenses such as contracting and advertising.

**NYConnects**

We have just been invited by the Columbia County Office for the Aging to submit a subcontractor budget for the next contract period for NYConnects of 4-1-2020 to 3-31-21.

**Helpers for Health**

The Helpers for Health Project is in large part suspended, since much of the activity focused on outreach and public education. Additionally, as this project is funded from the General Operating Support grant provided by the Dyson Foundation, we have made an effort to reduce project costs in order to preserve those discretionary dollars for other purposes should that become needed.

**Planning for a Return to the Workplace**

The effort to plan for a return to the workplace has been extensive. Lisa Thomas, Ashling Kelly and I have all viewed countless webinars, from a variety of sources, to inform the development of our written safety plan (currently in its 10th iteration and close to complete), signage, logs, and forms. We alerted staff that they will be asked to comply with daily mandatory health screenings and also surveyed them to determine if any employees are unable to return to the workplace; as a result, we are currently managing a couple of accommodation requests. At this time, we anticipate bringing members of the management team into the office starting on Monday, June 8th, to “test” our procedures and also make ready the space, and thereafter bringing back the remaining staff the following week. It is also expected that the building will be open to the public at that time, so we have advised staff that they should anticipate some amount of in-person service delivery, though we expect this to be minimal for some time to come.

**Paycheck Protection Program**

We applied for the Paycheck Protection Program on Wednesday, May 6th following approval from the Executive Committee, and received funds in the amount of $197,400 on Friday, May 8th. As I advised the Committee in May, I do not anticipate that, under current program terms, 100% of the loan amount will be forgiven, and choose, instead, to think of it as a very low interest loan. However, legislation currently being considered by Congress may significantly increase the loan period from 8 weeks to 24 weeks, as well as reduce the percentage of the loan that must be expensed on wages in order for any part of the loan to be forgiven. We will watch what happens with the legislation as well as take in any guidance we can regarding the forgiveness application. In the meantime, we are expensing the funds on payroll and some payroll expenses, such as health insurance contributions, as well as utilities such as phone and internet charges.

**Reorganization of our physical office space**

As you may know, we have lost some office space to the District Attorney’s Office. Consequently, we have had to move the Transportation Program to a new office on the second floor of the County Building located at 610 State Street. The new space is beautiful, and in many respects, a serious upgrade for the program and its staff. Other moves within the suite of offices at 325 are currently being made. The hope is to affect all these changes prior to June 15th, so there will be little to no disruption to program staff after they return.

**Update on Strategic Plan**

**Goal: Develop and Strengthen our Workforce**

**Strategy: Competitive Compensation**

As you may recall, we were able to commit some funds from a Rural Health Network funding stream to conduct a Compensation Study in the early part of this year. Results from that study were provided to us in late March and were exactly the kind of information I had hoped to receive. While the study revealed that a majority of our staff are compensated close to or at the compensation goal (in itself the midpoint of a range established by “benchmarking” positions against numerous compensation studies), the study did identify several positions that were below 80% of the target. These were primarily, though not exclusively, drivers. Although it is obviously a difficult time to tune up wages, I nevertheless think that it is important to keep pushing toward this goal, and have outlined targets to get all staff up to at least 90% of their 2020 comp target within the year.