**Columbia County Community Healthcare Consortium, Inc.**

**Executive Director’s Report to the Board, February 6, 2019**

**Program Updates**

Rural Health Network Program Update

The RHN contract year began on January 1, 2019. We are currently funded at $190,000 per year for the next five years. Unlike in prior years, the Executive Budget did not propose a reduction or elimination of the program.

Navigator Program Update

We continue to await a response to our grant application to the NYSDOH for the Navigator Program. We requested $330,000 for the 5-year period beginning May 1st, 2019 and ending April 30, 2024. We have been advised that notice will be given this month. In the meantime, we are preparing and submitting a request to modify the budget of the existing contract that expires on April 30, 2019. Among other reasons, a budget modification was necessary to provide for more funds in the fringe line, as a result of greater health insurance utilization by program staff.

NYConnects Program Update

CCOFA is in the process of amending our current contract upward, from $90,000 to $140,000. The next contract period begins April 1, 2019. NYSOFA has not advised the County what next contract year’s allocation will be.

Transportation Program Update

Although we have been contracted with Circulation, the web-based platform that is being utilized by the two Albany-area DSRIP Performing Provider Systems (PPS’s), the Alliance for Better Health (“the Alliance”) and Better Healthcare for Northeastern NY (BHNNY), since early December, we have not been dispatched any trips. After some investigation, we learned this is largely because BHNNY has provided very little outreach, education or support to the agencies that would be responsible for initiating transport. Very frustrating. We alerted BHNNY to the deep interest among local providers in learning more about this service option, and are now helping them to organize a training in Hudson in March.

The Community Health Worker Project

 We have submitted an application to the Dyson Foundation for General Operating Support, which, if granted, will be used, in part, to support the Community Health Worker Project (formerly the SUNY Women’s Health Project) once it comes under the Consortium’s umbrella in the early part of 2019. I have been advised that I should hear the outcome of our application by the end of next week.

**Personnel Updates**

Taylor Wenk, part-time Navigator, part-time Information and Assistance Specialist with the NYConnects Program, will be leaving us on March 2nd to pursue a nursing degree in NYC. We’re both very happy for Taylor and very sorry to lose her. We are currently advertising for the position, renamed “Consumer Assistance Specialist,” and have interviewed a few candidates We expect that this position, which is a challenging one to fill at any time, will be particularly so at this time.

**Policy Updates**

On Monday, January 28th, I attended a policy briefing at the Legislative Office Building that included HANYS, MHANYS, CHCANYS and others. While there, I learned the following things of interest:

* The Governor’s Budget created the Governor’s Commission on Universal Access, which creates a forum for an extended stakeholder discussion about single payer.
* There was language in the Governor’s budget that allows for the extension of DSRIP waivers beyond the project period
* Community Health Centers have observed a drop-off in immigrants enrolling/renewing in Medicaid because they fear the Public Charge provision, which disadvantages individuals applying for admission or green cards if they demonstrate through prior program enrollment that they may become “primarily dependent on the government for subsistence, as demonstrated by either the receipt of public cash assistance for income maintenance, or institutionalization for long-term care at government expense.” Changes proposed by the US Dept. of Homeland Security would expand benefits considered under public charge determinations to include non-emergency Medicaid, SNAP, the Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy, an Section 8 housing assistance (SSI and TANF are already and will continue to be considered).. This may have a dampening effect on enrollment, which may impact uncompensated care at hospitals and FQHC’s.
* At the briefing, we also heard from Steve Kroll about rural EMS. He asserted that there is a crisis in the making, tied to a decline in volunteers and an unsustainable reimbursement model.

**Board and Community Relations**

* On Monday, January 7th, I attended the Human Services Advisory Council meeting at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck.
* On Thursday, January 10th, I attended a training on Community Service Boards in Non-Chartered Counties
* On Friday, January 11th and again on Monday, January 14th, Linda Tripp and I had informal networking lunches with select board members. This was an initiative of the Governance Committee, which is seeking to engage particularly newer members
* On January 14th,
* On January 16th, I addressed the Hudson Lion’s Club at their evening meeting
* On January 17th I spoke to participants in this year’s Leadership Columbia-Greene group at CGCC
* On January 23rd I was one of several reviewers of applications to the NYS Health Foundation’s Special Projects Fund
* On January 24th, Lisa Thomas, Elaine Allen and I attended a training on Human Trafficking
* On February 1st, I addressed the East Coast Riders, a motorcycle club that does considerable fundraising for charitable endeavors, at their evening meeting in Kinderhook
* On February 2nd, I represented the Healthcare Consortium at CMH’s annual Winter Blast

**Upcoming Events**

* On February 25th, I will be meeting with the Workforce Development Committee, a workgroup of the Human Services Advisory Council, at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck
* On February 28th, I will address the Greenport Seniors
* On March 8th, I will attend the last Community Advisory Committee Meeting of the SUNY Women’s Health Project, where the transfer of the project to the Consortium will be announced
* On March 13th, several staff and I will attend a training provided by BHNNY to become “users” of the Circulation platform for non-medical transport