



Committee on Seniors & Constituencies

~AGENDA~

Tuesday, March, 21, 2017

10:00 AM

Committee Chair: David J. Tubiolo

Committee Room, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601

www.westchesterlegislators.com

CALL TO ORDER

The committee on Seniors & Constituencies will meet on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 10:00 am.

MINUTES APPROVAL

1. Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 10:00 AM

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

The committee has invited Mae Carpenter, Commissioner of Senior Services and Programs; Ann Darcy, Coordinator, Nutrition Health & Wellness will attend on her behalf as well as Carol Christiansen, Director of Development of Drug Crisis in Our Backyard for a follow up discussion to our meeting that took place on February 21, 2017. The committee has also invited Carolyn Fluckinger, Program Director of the Family Service Society of Yonkers she will discuss the Kinship Support Program.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

Unfinished Business and any other agenda items to come before the Committee.

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT



Committee on Seniors & Constituencies

~MINUTES~

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

10:00 AM

Committee Chair: David J. Tubiolo

DRAFT

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Committee Room, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601

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CALL TO ORDER

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
David J. Tubiolo	Chair	Present	
Sheila Marcotte	D10 Legislator	Present	
MaryJane Shimsky	D12 Legislator	Present	
Alfreda Williams	D8 Legislator (Majority Whip)	Present	
Michael Kaplowitz	D4 Legislator (Chairman of the Board)	Absent	

Others In Attendance: BOL: Legislators Boykin, Testa, Corcoran, Burrows, Borgia and Legislator Maisano via phone; Dante Daly, Gary Zuckerman, Jackson, Tina Limengo, Yolanda Valencia, Melanie Montalto, Abril Lopez CEO: Commissioners Mae Carpenter and Mark Herceg GUESTS: MaryKate Acquisto of Senator Terrance Murphy Office, Carol Christiansen and Ray Dorrite of Drug Crisis in Our Backyard

MINUTES APPROVAL

1. Friday, January 27, 2017 at 9:00 AM

On motion of Legislator Shimsky seconded by Legislator Marcotte the minutes were approved 4 -0.

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Legislator Tubiolo invited Commissioner Mae Carpenter of Senior Services and Programs, MaryKate Acquisto from Senator Murphy's office, Commissioner Mark Herceg of the Department of Mental Health to speak on what is being done to prevent and help solve opioid issues being faced by seniors. Commissioner Mae Carpenter of Senior Services and Programs began by stating that by the year 2020 twenty percent of the nation's population will be over the age of 65. Thirty-three percent of pain medication is taken by seniors. She stated that the prescriptions given by doctors and pharmaceutical companies are too large. Giving a senior 30 tablets when they only needed 5 might result in them handing off the extra medication to a friend who is also in pain. We need to educate seniors to not share their medications and educate pharmaceutical companies and doctors to stop writing such large prescriptions. Commissioner Mark Herceg of the Department of Mental Health spoke on statistics relating to drug use among seniors. He stated that in 2015, according to the CDC, the rate of opioid use was higher among adults from 40 to 59. Women are more likely to become addicted to opioids than men. For seniors alcohol abuse is a gateway to the use of opioids. Individuals over the age of 60 are more prone to depression especially post-operatively. Those who go to nursing homes are also in danger. In the elderly, opioids impact them differently. They have less body mass, their bodies are leaner, and there is less blood flow so it metabolizes slower which makes it easier to get addicted. There is a growing need for therapy as opposed to medication

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Feb 21, 2017 10:00 AM (MINUTES APPROVAL)

assisted therapy. Legislator Catherine Borgia asked Commissioner Herceg to talk more about the use of talk therapy for pain management who stated that it has been proven to be the most useful form of pain management given that it was a way to divert the pain. Legislator Borgia then asked what her mother could do with all the extra medication she had in her medicine cabinet. Commissioner Herceg stated that there are drop boxes for pills at certain locations around the county where people can drop off their extra meds. There are not many around the county because it requires 24/7 police presence. He then explained that women are more likely to become addicted because they get themselves to the doctors and treated faster than men making them part of the statistics. Commissioner Mae Carpenter then spoke about how social isolation is the beginning of a downward spiral. The Ambassador Outreach Program will kick off in April in order to help seniors fight their social isolation. Legislator Testa mentioned doing something to reach out to the seniors or find a way to set up drop-offs so that they don't hold on to their extra meds. Commissioner Herceg mentioned that there is a lot of danger with seniors who are experiencing beginnings of dementia or other neurological conditions because they can overdose. They see their pills and take multiple ones to "make up" for what they didn't take. It was mentioned that the County website has list of drop-off locations for medications. There is one in White Plains and Scarsdale. MaryKate Acquisto from Senator Murphy's office spoke about what is being done by the Senator to help fight this epidemic. She mentioned that fighting the heroin epidemic is one of his main focuses. He also supports a bill that looks to limit the amount of medication given in the initial prescription. He also sponsors a bill that would give an informational pamphlet to patients when an opioid is prescribed so that they know the risks. Looking to conduct more Shed the Meds events where a drop off box is brought around to collect extra medications. A closed off Roundtable meeting will be held at Somers tomorrow, 2/22/17, to open lines of communication between treatment centers and organizations. Legislator Tubiolo then invited guests Ray Dorrite and Carol Christiansen of Drug Crisis in Our Backyard to speak. Legislator Corcoran asked to know if there were any statistics on overdose. Ray Dorrite stated that in Westchester County in 2015 there were 107 drug overdose deaths, 38 of which were seniors over 55. Legislator Shimsky added that according to the CDC there were 33,000 deaths from opioids and heroin in 2015 nationwide. Legislator Williams then related a personal anecdote in which at one point after a surgery oxycodone was almost forced on her despite her not feeling any pain. Legislator Tubiolo brought up that another big issue surrounding seniors is that often time's medication is stolen from them by families and friends and sold elsewhere and it is recommended that they have a lock box. Legislator Shimsky asked the question on whether or not medications should be prescribed at all. She then related a personal anecdote in which her mother was prescribed an opioid. She believes that opioid prescription needs to be controlled because it causes irreparable damage to families and the people themselves. Carol Christiansen then went on to speak on how at a rally, two doctors from John's Hopkins said that opioids do not need to be used as painkillers. Often time's people do not question the medications given to them because they trust their doctors. She related a personal anecdote where her son overdosed on heroin and died after suffering from an addiction to opioids which began after his doctor prescribed them to him for back pain. She then stated that according to an article the death toll was closer to 100,000 due to overdose rather than 33,000. Legislator Tubiolo asked for ways on how to prevent or help alleviate the crisis. Carol Christiansen then replied that raising awareness greatly helps, dropping off drugs at police stations, speaking at senior centers, having families become more involved. She mentioned that oxycodone is a synthetic heroin. When talking about drug epidemics people automatically think of teens when the average age is 41 or people who have overdosed. Legislator Tubiolo asked what can be done by each district to help enable drop-offs. It was reiterated that a list of drop-off boxes can be found on the district website and that police stations can also be used. Commissioner Herceg recommended the signing of a healthcare proxy so that children can communicate with their parent's doctors because HIPPA can prevent the sharing of important information. Ray Dorrite then shared more statistics on senior addictions. There are now according to the CDC approximately 3 million seniors that are addicted to opioid medication. By 2020, it is projected that there will be 6

million seniors addicted to opioid pain medications. A third of all Medicare beneficiaries last year received at least one prescription for painkillers with an average of five refills. Emergency departments saw a 78% rise in the number of visits among older adults with misuse of prescription drugs between 2006 and 2012. He recommends looking for ways to reach out and educate as many seniors as possible about the situation. Physicians are in a way enabling these addictions because they know of their existence but they believe that at that point there is not much to be done. Legislator Tubiolo called upon Janice Phillips, the President of Coyne Park Senior Center in Yonkers to speak. At the center there has been a lot of focus on exercise such as yoga, dancing, and singing to help with pain management. She extended an invitation to Commissioner Mae Carpenter to have her come and speak to the seniors at the center. Commissioner Mae Carpenter spoke about a six week, Chronic Disease Self Care Management Program that deals with medication and pain management, and chronic diseases. She also spoke about the Ambassador Program in all senior centers and assisted living centers and training will take place in March at Westchester Community College. Legislator Shimsky would like to send out EBlasts dealing with Shed the Meds, options on how to deal with pain, and how to talk to your doctor. It is really important to figure out how deal with the first prescription. Legislator Marcotte spoke about the possibility about attaching healthcare proxy information to the EBlasts. Commissioner Mae Carpenter spoke about an event being held March 18th, 2017, at the Yorktown Community Center attorneys working pro bono sessions and healthcare proxies. Commissioner Herceg encouraged the pushing of physicians to find alternate ways to deal with pain. Legislator Williams stated the importance of looking into what and how doctors are prescribing because it is affected too many people. Commissioner Herceg shared some recommendations that have been made to doctors regarding medication prescription. Ray Dorrite stated that pharmaceutical companies sometimes manipulate information shared.

1. **(ID # 9894) Communication – HON. MARYJANE SHIMSKY: Society of Certified Senior Advisors Article - "Seniors Biggest Users of Opioids":**

Forwarding a *Society of Certified Senior Advisors* article entitled, "Seniors Biggest Users of Opioids."

2. **(ID # 9907) Communication – HON. MARYJANE SHIMSKY: The Pew Charitable Trusts Article - "U.S. Opioid Overdose Deaths Reach Record Highs":**

Forwarding an article from *The Pew Charitable Trusts* entitled, "U.S. Opioid Overdose Deaths Reach Record Highs."

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Tubiolo seconded by Legislator Shimsky the Committee adjourned at 11:00 am.