DSS Commissioner Jenny Jones

Jenny reported over $38,000 cost avoidance resulting from program integrity initiatives by local staff to detect fraud.

Changes to the MLTC that affect patients in Skilled Nursing Facilities: The requirements for assigning a MLTC plan between Medicaid and nursing homes who provide patient services have changed. Permanently placed nursing home patients; after 3 months; will no longer need to be enrolled into a State-approved long-term care plans. Those who already have a long-range plan will be transitioned off the program.

Community First Choice Options receives enhanced Federal funding, so the State is pushing these options which will need to be managed but the local DSS’s for enhanced in home care services.

State regulations have historically allowed Caseworkers to attend any of the State sponsored Academies located throughout the State for the 13-week training program. Caseworkers must be certified before accepting a child protective report, which may not happen until six months into employment. Effective January 2019, the State will require all Caseworkers to be trained solely at the Training Center to be opened in Albany. They will learn from mock court rooms, mock home visits and on-site training labs.

Currently, there are 30 Caseworker openings in Erie County and Monroe, 27 in Oneida and several in Jefferson. Training costs per employee are substantial, estimated at $55,000, particularly citing considerable employee turnover in this field. Moreover, Caseworkers must complete recertification classes annually. Additionally, there is no demand to remain with a certain employer. Ryan Piche suggests a review of salary levels that should reflect educational requirements and scope of work to enhance retention percentages.

Deputy Sheriff Knight recently provided drug paraphernalia identification instruction to all employees located in the Outer Stowe Street office building. He impressed the importance of utilizing personal protective equipment.

On 5/23/18 all DSS staff will participate in seminar on "Change Management".

Jenny reported that Michele Ledoux is coordinating an active shooter training for later this summer to encompass the entire building.

The $1.93 Million expended for HEAP applicants during the 2017-2018 heating season represents a substantial increase over last year. There were 1,116 emergency HEAP payments issued. Over the past nine years, HEAP administrative funding has reduced by over $99,000, while the number of applicants and benefits continue to escalate.

Pursuant to regulatory requirements, DSS has designated Office For Aging staff as alternate HEAP applicant certifiers. The OFA contractual amount for these services continues to decline.
commensurate with diminished Federal funding, from a high of $17,000 to the most recent $4,000. Accordingly, OFA was forced to cease after processing 201 HEAP applications.

Those enrolled for SNAP benefits are automatically eligible for HEAP.

Jenny reported receipt of a Senior Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) bonus check of $25,000, which cannot be used for personnel expense. Therefore, she is reviewing/analyzing computer system upgrades or other allowable expenditures.

Lewis, as well as six other Counties, were informed they are no longer eligible for funding for their Nutrition Outreach [E ]Program ("NOEP") coverage, which will cease on 6/30/2018. The seven county DSS Commissioners may band together to jointly pursue renewed funding. The Pre-Natal Council refers 50-60 people each month. Jenny asserted that through the Delivery Systems Reform Incentive Program (DSRIP) persons may avail appropriate medical care, while questioning the wisdom of terminating NOEP funding that assists with basic food needs.

Ryan Piche stated that one of the functions of the IDA's marketing campaign will be to inform the public of the range of available DSS services.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Clark, Clerk of the Board
- **Cost avoidance report:** Districts must accept applications for the HEAP CAC beginning on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 through Friday, August 31, 2018, or until funds allocated to this component are exhausted, whichever comes first. If the dates of operation are revised, districts will be notified via the General Information System (GIS).

- HEAP Trends Chart:
- Changes to MLTC-SNF patients
- Contract for Emergency Shelter
- Training at DSS:
  - May 8
    - Drug recognition training – entire building trained by LC Sheriff’s Office-issues identified
  - May 23
    - Kate Ebersole on Change Management – Entire DSS staff
  - Late July/August
    - Active Shooter Training – Entire Stowe Street Building-FREE done by CCE ½ day
- Loss of NOEP coverage for Lewis County starting June 30

**Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board – Request for Resolution**

**Resolution to Re-Appoint a Community Member:** Requesting to re-appoint Ward Dailey, Michele Ledoux, and Deanna Edick, to another 2-year term on the Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board, effective July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020.
May 16, 2018
DSS Legislative Committee Meeting

Resolutions to Renew Existing Agreements

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County-Parent Educator Program: This agreement is for the purchase of Parent Educator Services and is for the period June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019 and is not to exceed $61,500. Local Share is 25%; Federal 50% and State 25%.

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc. —“Homeless Apartment Initiative: Requesting authorization to renew this agreement for the purchase of services. The agreement is for the period June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019 and is Not to Exceed $26,585 (this is an increase of $6,616.01 from last year due to usage). Local Share 0 – 100% depending on the eligibility of the client and the State and Federal share depends on the eligibility of the client.

MAMI (Multicultural Association of Medical Interpreters): For the purchase of Interpretation Services. This renewal is for the period June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019. Rates vary depending on Interpretation Service needed. Local Share is 25%; 25% State; and 50% Federal.

Motion to fill Existing Positions

Employment & Training Specialist, Full-Time, Permanent: Requesting to fill the existing position of Employment & Training Specialist. This position is vacant due to a resignation (Kristen Isele-Johnson). This position is 90% WIOA funded, 10% that is subject to state and federal reimbursement; and local share is 2.5%.

Social Services Program Examiner, Full-Time, Provisional: Requesting a motion to fill the existing position of Social Services Program Examiner. This position will become vacant due to a promotion (Maryann Haigh) and will be a provisional appointment due to not having a valid Civil Service list.

Community Services Worker, Full-Time, Permanent: Requesting a motion to fill the existing position of Community Services Worker. This position will become vacant due to a promotion (Patricia Mooney). This position is located within the services unit.

Commissioner’s Report:
April 25, 2018

Jennifer Jones, Commissioner
Lewis County Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 193 5274 Outer Stowe
Lowville, NY 13367

Dear Commissioner Jones:

One of OTDA’s highest priorities is maintaining the integrity of our welfare programs. This not only ensures that benefits are issued to those New Yorkers that are truly entitled, but it also maintains public confidence in our abilities to control fraud, waste and abuse.

Program Integrity initiatives, listed on the attached page, play an enormous role in keeping costs down and preventing assistance funds from being provided to ineligible individuals.

Attached is the most recent data available on the cost avoidance your county has achieved through these initiatives. We hope you will find this information helpful, particularly in any budget discussions you may have. For further information on cost avoidance calculations, please review 14-INF-09.

We commend your investigative staff for its efforts and for working together with your eligibility staff to provide this savings to your county, to the State of New York and to the Federal Government. Should you or your staff have questions on any of the data provided, please do not hesitate to contact me at 518.402.0117 or Stephen.Bach@otda.ny.gov

Sincerely,

Stephen Bach

Stephen Bach, Director
Program Integrity

cc: Virkler, Caroline
## Cost Avoidance for Program Integrity Initiatives

### Calendar Year 1/1/2017 – 12/31/2017

**LEWIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of Application Denials, Case Closings, or Grant Reductions</th>
<th>Estimated Cost Avoidance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front End Detection System (FEDS)</td>
<td>Detecting fraud at application</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$24,396</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verified Employment Data (VED) Computer Match</td>
<td>Detecting unreported income on TANF adult cases</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) Computer Match</td>
<td>Detecting out of state residency and duplicate benefits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$6,960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prison Computer Match</td>
<td>Detecting incarcerated individuals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional Program Violations (IPV)</td>
<td>Disqualification Sanctions for those Found Guilty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$6,720</td>
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The Home Energy Assistance Program ( HEAP ) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. If eligible, recipients may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year and could also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits if they are in danger of running out of fuel or having their utility service shut off. HEAP funds are distributed by the Federal Government to NYS OTDA. OTDA distributes an administrative allotment to each local social services district to process HEAP eligibility. Each local Social Services district is required to enter into an agreement to have “alternate certifiers” of the HEAP program; in Lewis County Office for the Aging is designated. The administrative funds distributed to Lewis County have decreased each year. The benefit funds distributed for each recipient has no local share cost but is instead federal pass through funds.

Facts about the HEAP program are listed and illustrated below.

The number of HEAP benefits issued has varied with changes in utilization noted above. Utilization variations may be related to extremely high costs of fuel and/or the addition of extra emergency benefits being issued. In 2017-18, 1,116 Emergency Benefits were issued by DSS.
Lewis County DSS has distributed a substantial amount of funds to local HEAP vendors; $1,933,665 in 2017-18. The all time high payments were $2,088,428 in 2010-11.

DSS receives funding from OTDA to perform eligibility determinations; there has been a reduction in funding for this program from $188,592 in 2009-10 to $88,962 in 2017-18 a loss of $99,630. This reduction is experienced statewide at all local districts.
As benefit amounts have increased administrative support from OTDA has decreased.

DSS enters into a contract annually with OFA for alternate certifier responsibilities. The contract amount is paid to OFA directly from the administrative allocation given to DSS. Contracted amounts to OFA from 2009-2016 were $17,000 but with the administrative allocation reduction DSS reduced the contract to OFA to $11,000 in 2016-17 and $4,000 in 2016-17.

Note: DSS does not receive the allocation amounts until mid- HEAP season.
OFA has seen a reduction in households they have assisted in completing HEAP applications. This is in part due to increased SNAP households as SNAP recipients do not need to complete a separate HEAP application. Please note that in 2016-17 HEAP year OFA completed eligibility determinations but in other years the contract was for application assistance. In 2017-18 OFA stopped taking application assistance after completing 201 applications due to the funding decrease.

DSS is required to determine eligibility for anyone that applies for the benefit regardless of administrative funding received.

In closing; HEAP is considered an economic driver in Lewis County. Administrative funding allocations allows DSS to hire temporary employees to assist with the increased workload. For the past 2 years temporary HEAP staff were stationed at OFA during early outreach and then at DSS for the remainder of the heating season. HEAP is now changing into a year around program with other benefits such as Clean and Tune, HEAP Cooling and Furnace Repair and Replacement available at various periods through the year.