The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter typed (SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 in the 2nd floor conference room of the Human Services Center, Canton, New York.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jim Bunstone, Benjamin Gruda, and Dr. Anthony Tramontano

**PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF PRESENT:** Susan Hathaway, PH Director, Laura Duval, Director of Patient Services and Anne Waite, Compliance Officer

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Benjamin Gruda called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 4, 2012 MINUTES**

The minutes for December 4, 2012 were not discussed or approved due to the lack of a quorum. They will be presented at the next meeting for discussion and approval.

**COMMUNICATION**

There was no communication to present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**COMPLIANCE TRAINING – Anne Waite**

Anne Waite presented a Power Point presentation for the annual Corporate Compliance training for the SLCBOH.

**REPORTS**

**CHHA/LTHHCP (Closure) – Laura Duval**

Ms. Duval distributed a timeline of events for the Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA) and Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP) closure to inform the Board where the closure process is at the present time.
Ms. Hathaway is and has been working very closely with the State. Regular meetings are also being held with the Director of Patient Services from Health Services of Northern New York (HSNNY) to ensure the smooth transition of our patients. At these meetings caseloads are reviewed and patient needs are being discussed before the transition of a patient. The transition is going smoothly.

It has been a very difficult time for everyone in the department. The primary nurses have met with patients and answered any questions they may have had. Patients have a recertification period every sixty days and that is when patients are being transitioned to HSNNY. Our caseload started at over 200 patients and we are currently down to 53. Forty-seven of the remaining patients are on the LTHHCP. Many of the patients were discharged under normal circumstances. We have had approximately 80 patients that have transitioned to HSNNY. Some patients were transitioned earlier than anticipated.

It has been a lot of work with the State giving us step-by-step guidance. We’re currently awaiting State approval of the Certificate of Need (CON) for HSNNY to become a LTHHCP before we can begin the process of transitioning our LTHHCP clients. The CON is currently being reviewed in Albany and once approved their LTHHCP policies and procedures must also be approved. After everything has received approval, the State will have to make a site visit. We’re no long accepting new patients in LTHHCP at the direction of the State.

Our staff has changed significantly. It’s a day-to-day process to balance staffing to provide for the needs of our remaining patients.

**Question:** Are you on schedule?

**Answer (Ms. Hathaway):** Yes we are. By the end of March all CHHA patients will be discharged.

**Question:** How did we get this April 11 date for the Public Health and Health Planning Council to render a decision on HSNNY Certificate of Need to become a LTHHCP provider?

**Answer (Ms. Hathaway):** The State will meet for approval on that date. Also Matt O’Bryan head of HSNNY sent me a copy of the letter stating that the review would be on March 21st and the full council would meet on April 11 and at that point we anticipate the CON will be approved. We gave HSNNY all of our current LTHHCP policies and procedures and their corporate office is rewriting them to make them their own. The State will need to do an on-site visit and then HSNNY will have to receive their Medicaid rate. We don’t know how long this will take. The State has really assisted in moving this along.
HSNNY has hired one of our supervisors and two of our nurses to take over the LTHHCP program for them. The transition should be able to happen quite rapidly. If the two nurses could do two Starts of Care per day each, it would only take approximately two to three weeks to transition all the patients. The State has reinforced with us that until the patients are transitioned, it is our responsibility to ensure their care. Janine Giglio, supervising nurse for CHHA and LTHHCP is doing a beautiful job and will be the last nurse remaining in CHHA until all patients have transitioned.

Thirty-five jobs will be lost. Thirty-one are already gone. Four people are left to be laid off which will not happen until the LTHHCP is ready to close.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Tobacco Law**

The tobacco law goes into effect on May 4th. You may have noticed a sign on the door stating “2 Months To Go”. We’re putting out information to county employees. Chris Boulio, Human Resources Director, has done a nice job of setting up discount programs to provide county employees with a 15% discount on all Kinney Drug brand products and a 10% discount on tobacco cessation products. We’ll provide free cessation classes starting on April 9th. We have quite a campaign going and there will be a new section added on our website. We’ll be presenting information at the April department head meeting as they have expressed concerns about the upcoming change and the effect it will have on their departments. We expect this to be a hot topic when the law goes into effect. We’re going to try to enforce the law with education. We would like people to think of county property the same as schools. The New York State Quit hotline was also put out to employees, but they must qualify for the program.

There was discussion of a law requiring that all tobacco products be put out of sight. It was felt this was a good idea although there was a question as to whether or not we would be imposing on people’s rights.

**Question:** How do we enforce this?

**Answer (Ms. Hathaway):** You can walk up to someone who is smoking and tell them to put the cigarette out or to stop chewing and if they don’t, call the village police. I think initially people will resist it, but eventually they will become used to it.

We have received a COLA from the tobacco grant which has been used to purchase a great deal of signage which will be put up on St. Lawrence County properties. We have also looked into small handout cards to hand to people

**Board Openings**
The SLCBOH needs to make a recommendation to the Board of Legislators as to who they would like appointed to the Board of Health. The Board of Legislators makes the appointments.

Legislator Morrill submitted Robert Seamon’s name to the BOL for appointment and Ms. Hathaway sent Victor Pisani’s name for appointment at the direction of this Board. Mr. Morrill and Legislator Jonathan Putney would like someone from the southern part of the county appointed. The BOL is waiting for the BOH’s recommendation. Dr. Scott Spicer’s appointment is necessary as the Board needs another physician. Jessica Smith is a veterinarian who is very interested in becoming a member of this Board.

The main focus of the Board at this time is the sanitary code. We need someone with expertise in that area. The BOL tries to focus on representation from all areas of the county. We have made an effort to do this by canvassing for physicians from all areas of the county with no success. If the sanitary code is a goal of the Board, it would make sense to have Mr. Pisani to help us. Mr. Pisani was the director of the regional NYSDOH office which handles environmental issues. Dr. Healy expressed his desire to have a local sanitary code at the strategic planning meeting.

It’s the opinion of the Board members that a veterinarian is needed on the Board because of the number of animal related issues such as rabies and EEE.

President Gruda asked Mr. Bunstone to relay the recommendation to the Board of Legislators that Mr. Pisani, Dr. Spicer and Dr. Smith be appointed to the Board of Health. All members present are in agreement with this recommendation. If the recommendation is followed, it would be possible for Mr. Pisani and Dr. Spicer to be available for our April meeting. It will be May before the Board of Health is fully staffed again.

LHCSA Approval

We received approval our LHCSA application in February of this year. We're fully approved as a Licensed Home Care Services Agency. We will open for business as a LHCSA as soon as the last patient is transitioned. Ms. Hathaway will surrender the Certified Home Health Agency certificate and the department will then be a LHCSA.

NEW BUSINESS

Strategic Planning
Dr. Healey came to our last strategic planning meeting and spent more than two hours discussing our future. He had some great ideals that he wanted to talk about as a Board of Health member. He did an excellent job in helping the strategic planning process.

A grant was received to hire CITEC to assist us in developing a strategic plan. We did a SWOT analysis and revised our Vision and Mission Statements to reflect what we want to accomplish and represent in the future. We then began working on goals. Ms. Hathaway said she felt this has been therapeutic for the group. We need to completely reorganize the department. There are still 21 programs we need to deliver to the county residents. We’re now focusing on babies and children and not older people as we were with home care.

Some of the issues discussed at the strategic planning committee meeting were the local sanitary code, future of the department, the changes, downsizing focus, business awareness; positive focus; and prevention. We also talked about Public Health seeking widespread support. People think we’re closing as a department. There is a perception out there that we are gone and that is far from the truth. This is going to be a larger issue for us. Dr. Healey suggested we look for support from the five hospitals in the county and also local colleges. They may be willing to work with us to get the message out. We will soon have a strategic plan for the Public Health Department. We’ve talked about ways the Board of Health could promote this to the Board of Legislators and talk about our ideas.

We’re looking forward to a more positive community when we get back up to full functioning. The Board of Health needs to become more visible in the community. We talked about ways to access funding for programs we may want to develop and not go to the BOL for money.

Tomorrow the county health rankings will be announced. We are number 57 out of 62 counties again. We have not improved at all. The only area we are good in is environment. We have a lot of challenges ahead. Where do you want Public Health to focus?

**Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)**

The Professional Advisory Committee was the governing committee for the CHHA. It’s required that we have something similar to the Professional Advisory Committee to oversee the LHCSA. The management team felt that the PAC should continue. The only other choice would be the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee and its members are all internal. We felt that because staff will continue to go into patient’s homes, that PAC should continue and this was put into our LHSCA application. It was also felt that a Board of Health member should be added to PAC as a member. Mr. Gruda agreed to become a member of PAC and Ms. Hathaway said she would email
him the Biodata Sheet that needs to be completed and submitted to the Board of Legislators for appointment.

We're currently looking over the present membership of PAC. We have asked Dr. David Dunn, our medical director, to serve and he has agreed. Ms. Sandra Worden, RN and retired Director of Patient Services also has agreed. We'll send letters to members who don't attend thanking them for their years of service so we can fill their seats with active members.

PAC is to provide review of policies and procedures. They are also to help direct where the LHSCA is heading and what it is doing. It is an advisory committee providing direction.

Obesity needs to be the next issue that the BOH tackles. We're going to try to make changes to the vending machines in the county. Ms. Hathaway said that she would like to see some refrigerated machines with some healthy choices available. Also she would like to see a better choice of non-sugar sweetened beverages.

**PERSONNEL**

As already mentioned, we have laid off or had 31 staff retire. There are still four more staff members to be laid off once LTHHCP patients transition to HSNNY.

All staff will be moving to one side of the building in the near future.

At 7:30 pm Mr. Gruda asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary A. Brown
Administrative Assistant