

**Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board  
December 2, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on December 2, 2009 in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:15 pm Chairwoman Beverly Cody presided.

**PRESENT:**

**GROUP A**

Frank Krotschinsky	Representing County Executive Steve Levy
Linda O'Donohoe	S.C. Department of Social Services
Lew Johnson	Representing S.C. Department of Public Works, Design & Construction Division

**GROUP B**

Beverly Cody	Member, Secretary & Acting Chair
Kleo King, Esq.	Member, United Spinal Association

**GROUP C**

Teresa Strum	Member, Western Suffolk BOCES
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**GROUP D**

Jodi Nicastro	Rep., Ingo Gloeckner, Member, VESID
Mitchell Shapiro	Member

**GUESTS:** Kevin Darcy, SCDPW Transportation  
Douglas King, Representing Congressman Steve Israel and Erin King  
John Mikochik & his Personal Care Attendant

**STAFF:** Heidi Zeitler, Senior Clerk Typist, Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services

**EXCUSED:** Leg. Kate Browning, Judy Record, Joseph Sanseverino, Valerie Lewis, Jack Caffey, Alice Young, Glenn Campbell, Esq., Barbara Falkman, Terry Maccarrone, Paulette Bartunek, Debbie Epple, Roy Probeyahn, Jim Sorrentino

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2009:** Beverly asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes as distributed. There were none. Teresa made a motion to accept the minutes as distributed and Mitch seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:** Beverly congratulated Frank and his wife on their new baby girl that was born on October 27, 2009.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Architectural Barriers** – Lew had nothing new to report. Mitch mentioned he has revisited the Costco in Deer Park and the handicapped parking is correct, however, the extra handicapped parking on the side of the building has no curb cuts. Someone might want to look into this since handicapped individuals have to navigate through the parking lot in order to get to the sidewalk.

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**Community Partnership** – Frank had nothing new to report.

**Education** – Teresa reported that effective October 1, 2009 all school districts who anticipate claiming, receiving or submitting claims in an excess of \$500,000 must have a compliance program in place. New York State was audited by the Federal Government for Medicaid reimbursement in 2002; the audits resulted in recommended Medicaid disallowances of approximately \$1.078 billion. As a result, part of the settlement agreement between NYS and the federal government, all agencies that are going to be submitting claims for Medicaid reimbursement, fitting the monetary parameters, have to put together an effective Compliance program. The effective date for having these Compliance programs in place was October 1, 2009, however, due to what was perceived as a lack of guidance, many districts have not been able to comply with this ruling. There are very few schools that have a Compliance program put together because there is no outline to what this compliance program should look like but there is an overview with compliance expectations. What is known is that school districts must create and implement a plan that fits Medicaid compliance rules and regulations, provides guidance to employees, includes a method to communicate compliance to all personnel involved, designates a compliance officer in the school district, include a disciplinary policy that will be in place and ensure that they identify any compliance risk areas. The system must be in place for prompt response and also non intimidation and non retaliation for anybody in the system that comes forward with a compliance issue to a compliance officer.

As an aside, the NYS School Boards Association hosted a free Webinar in November with James G. Sheehan, NYS Medicaid Inspector General to provide additional information on the new Medicaid requirements including the creation of the compliance program. Additionally, there are several websites available where districts can obtain the most up to date information available on the issue and other information related to Medicaid billing.

**Housing** – Vacant.

**Legislation** – Vacant. Frank said he doesn't have any new information to share on Healthcare Reform other than what is being reported in the news.

**Transportation** - Cliff was absent. Beverly asked about Cliff. Frank said Cliff's seat has gone beyond the time of the original term, but under county law people continue to serve until they have been replaced. The County Executive's Office said they hope to have the vacancies filled by the end of the year.

**Employment** - Alice was excused.

## **COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:**

**Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services** – Frank apologized for having to cancel the last SCDAB meeting on such short notice but Frank had a health problem which needed attention and then 2 days later his wife gave birth. Bob Boehner who was Bruce's long time PCA and also an employee of Suffolk County Handicapped Service's recently retired after many years of service. Frank also reported that our office recently obtained a Braille labeler for the SCAT Identification Cards. Frank said providers have not been getting back to Kevin Darcy regarding the Braille bus stop signage. Mitch said he would be glad to make some calls regarding this issue to help resolve it. Frank said one of the main issues that we came across with the signage was what color it should be. Once Mitch is able to obtain some information from these providers we will have another meeting with the Transportation Task Force to discuss everything.

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**Suffolk County Parks** - Terry was excused.

**S. C. Department of Social Services** – Linda said starting April 2010 Medicaid applicants won't need to be interviewed face to face anymore which eliminates having the person come into the DSS office.

Also if you are applying for Medicaid and you can document an emergency, the Department will schedule your interview on the same day as your application or they will expedite your application. Linda reported that the CDPAP figures for September were: 396 active cases. Linda said 10% of Suffolk residents are receiving Medicaid. In September 2009, DSS registered 4,737 applications and processed 4,871 and the present case load is 94,591.

**S. C. Office of Public Information** - Debbie was unable to attend today's meeting, but wanted everyone to know that individuals and agencies can now sign up to receive an electronic notice of upcoming Civil Service Test Announcements. This can be done through the county's e-Update system. It is simple and easy to navigate. Anyone interested in signing up can access the service from the county's home page at [www.suffolkcountyny.gov](http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov) once there, click on *Subscribe to our e-Updates* at the top-right of the page; complete the form and hit 'submit'. Debbie will be sending out a bulletin to all of you with this information.

**VESID** – Jodi said intake is up and a group orientation will be held in March 2010.

**Old Business** – None

**New Business** – Frank said he received an interesting e-mail regarding service animals, apparently there has been a ruling under the Air Carrier Access Act that people who come onto an airplane with a service animal are not to be questioned about why they have the service animal. Frank said there was an exception made to that ruling under President Bush that required people with psychiatric disabilities to have extensive documentation as to why they need to have a service dog. Frank asked why people with one type of disability should provide documentation while another person's disability isn't questioned. Frank said they could possibly resolve this issue by having the person with the disability contact the airline a couple of days prior so they can accommodate the person and the service animal. It seems to be targeting against a certain type of disability not the type of service animal. Frank said this issue was sent up to the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Person's with Disabilities in Albany. Frank passed out a copy of the e-mail with the link <http://www.psychdog.org/attach/PSDSACAcomments.pdf>. It was decided that instead of acting as a group, anyone who would be interested in contacting them would do so, since the deadline for comment period is 12/17/09, our comments can then be discussed at our next SCDAB meeting in January.

Kleo said she was at the meeting when the Department of Transportation (DOT) announced this a few years ago. The theory was that service animals are trained and an airline can refuse the service animal if it's acting up and emotional support animals (ESA) aren't specifically trained, but the person's disability can be helped by just having the animal on their lap which in turn helps to calm them down if they are afraid. Because there is no special training for some animals their reasoning was to ask for a doctor's note saying this person needs this service animal for emotional support.

Mitch mentioned a recent 60 Minutes episode which recently aired about the high cost of dying and how the government is spending millions of dollars on Medicare and Medicaid to help keep people who are terminal, alive. Another 60 Minutes program was about Medicare fraud and how one particular person made over \$20 million dollars filing false claims.

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**S.C. Department of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs** - Barbara was excused.

**S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division** - John retired.

**Glenn/SILO** - Glenn was excused.

**S.C. Human Rights Commission** - Paulette was excused.

**S.C. Community Development** – Joseph was excused.

**S.C. Library System** – Valerie was excused.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mitch made a motion to adjourn and Frank seconded the motion. All were in favor to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm in the conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heidi Zeitler