

**Minutes of November 25, 2020**

Present: Barry Brogan, Mandy Qualls, Claire Parde, Courtney Shaler, Ann Abdella, Ali Coates, Liz Urbanski Farrell

Excused: Bryan O’Donovan, Anne Marie Snell, Paul Pettit, Helen Evans

Staff: Sara Wall Bollinger

Guests: Bob Ross & Bud Zolkowski, ASAP; Katy Cook & Hope Plavin, AHI

The meeting convened at 9:03AM.

1. Barry Brogan: Welcome, quorum & agenda modifications.

1. Minutes of October 28th [Ann/Courtney] were approved.
2. Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Providers of NYS presentation

ASAPNYS has created a Rural Issues and Solutions Task Force and would like to align their advocacy with NYSARH. ASAP previously had a Rural Issues Committee 2010-2016. NY Senator Harckham has been supportive and recently won reelection. They are working with the School of Social Welfare at SUNY Albany to create a venn diagram and/or point system overlay to identify the most rural parts of NYS for a unique funding classification with NYS. The Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and the Primary Care Development Corporation share an interest in this concept which would create a third option for Medicaid rate-setting [downstate, upstate and rural]. There was discussion regarding how complicated this is and the pros and cons of changing existing definitions.

ASAPNYS Advocacy Priorities:

* Third funding level for rural [lower than downstate and higher than upstate]
* Expansion of broadband internet
* Vaccine distribution for rural communities
1. Adirondack Health Institute presentation

AHI in collaboration with Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization operates the North Country Telehealth Partnership. Many of the current Telehealth waivers run month to month with the Governor’s Executive Orders or quarterly with the federal Public Health Emergency. The use of telehealth increased exponentially during the pandemic. CMS has permanently expanded the number of CPT codes eligible for reimbursement when provided remotely. Governor Cuomo signed a law in June allowing telephonic visits, but regulations have not yet been released. Out of State providers may be permitted based on guidance from the Federation of State Medical Boards <https://www.fsmb.org/>. The cost sharing waiver for telehealth visits covered by private insurance ends 12/31/20.

AHI Advocacy Priorities:

* Telephonic [no video] visits allowed and paid
* Provider paid for visits with the Patient at Home
* Address HIPAA privacy issues with Telephonic visits
1. NYSARH is a member of the NYS COVID Vaccine Task Force. <https://forward.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-distribution-and-implementation-task-force> Ann Abdella attended a recent meeting. There is a concern that people will be reluctant to take the new vaccines when they become available. The Task Force has requested information regarding the nature of resident concerns so that communication and FAQ materials may address the actual concerns of residents. There was discussion about doing a survey of Members.

*Actions:*

1. Sara will connect with Task Force Co-Chair Laura Santilli at NYSDOH [a NYSARH Policy Committee delegation met with her last fall] for guidance.
2. Sara will reach out to the NYSPHA and NYSACHO to coordinate a response.
3. Sara will inform NYSARH President Helen Evans of this opportunity.
4. NYSARH needs advocacy to free up reimbursements from the 2019-20 Appropriation to pay Rural Access Hospitals and Rural Health Networks that contracted with NYSARH for pass-thru payments. A sample letter to NYS legislators was discussed.

*Actions:*

1. Sara will prepare template letters and telephone call bullets to help legislators comply with our requested action steps.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20.

Next Meeting: 12/9 10AM

*Please note that this meeting is off cycle and at a different time.*

Preliminary Agenda

1. Strategic Plan Goals we ran out of time to discuss.
2. Any actions required for the Vaccine Task Force.

 Respectfully submitted,

 Sara Wall Bollinger