

NYPWA All Commissioners' Meeting Summary

as held on March 16, 2023

Sarah Merrick, NYPWA President

NYPWA President Sarah Merrick and Executive Director Paul Brady opened February's virtual All Commissioners' Meeting by welcoming everyone and extending gratitude to the NYPWA Executive Board who helped craft a strong set of 2023 policy priorities during the board retreat on March 9-10. The policy priorities are attached to the meeting summary email.

Welcome Commissioner Chrisine Peters (Clinton)—New Commissioner Meeting Planned for April 5th!

NYPWA members congratulated and welcomed new Clinton County DSS Commissioner Christine Peters as she takes over following the retirement of our friend and colleague John Redden.

In addition, the NYPWA is planning a voluntary, in-person orientation for all our 'new' Commissioners on the afternoon of April 5 at the Marriot Hotel (Wolf Road, Albany) prior to our All Commissioners' Meeting taking place the next day. We are looking for opportunities to engage new members and help new Commissioners to get to know each other and their peers. Members from our Board of Directors will be on hand to help guide a rich conversation on the role of Commissioner and more. If you are going to attend, please respond to the NYPWA—and if you have specific topics of interest you'd like covered.

State Budget News—Assembly/Senate Budget Resolutions Passed...Negotiations to Heat Up

The state Assembly and Senate recently introduced one-house resolutions aimed at amending parts of the Governor's Executive Budget proposal. These resolutions do not reflect a final agreement and may not end up in the enacted 2023-24 budget. That said, both Chambers' budget plans seek a restoration of the Governor's proposal to assume \$624 million in federal eFMAP dollars.

Both chambers also seek to increase state share of Child Welfare from 62% to 65%—however, the Senate adds \$35 million in new funding to accommodate the increase, while the Assembly provides no additional dollars.

Check out the March 15 *Quickie Report* for more details on each house's budget resolutions. In addition, click the respective links for the [Assembly](#) and the [Senate](#) budget summary documents.

Temporary Assistance/Housing/SNAP

Rental Supplement Plans

Districts allocation of RSP funds has varied across the state—with many finding difficulty spending the funding under the its restrictive format.

SNAP

Commissioners expressed caution leading into the second half of the month given the end of enhanced pandemic SNAP payments. The NYPWA will monitor the situation and welcome Commissioners input on the local reaction to the loss of these funds.

Homeless Housing/Code Blue Workgroup

The Homeless Housing/Code Blue Workgroup is scheduled for a Webex meeting on Friday, March 24th. Many counties are describing circumstances where they are struggling to meet the needs of the homeless for a variety of reasons. The situation is further exacerbated by a lack of housing/shelter options and the problematic/dangerous behaviors of residents who may have mental health/substance abuse issues. These behaviors and public opinions toward the shelter providers/hotels has made maintaining working relationships a challenge. Counties are also reporting unprecedented numbers of families and individuals seeking housing. Additionally, the proposed ADM from OTDA on the Submission of Shelter Budgets and Associated Per Diems would place more burdens on districts at a time when counties are faced with staffing shortages.

The workgroup will help identify our priority issues and potential solutions. Once accomplished, we'll extend an invitation to OTDA to participate. Thanks to all the workgroup members!

Children Services

Cross-Systems/Children with Complex Needs

Commissioner Tiberio provided an update on the data she has received to date from districts regarding cross-systems children with complex needs. The collected data indicates that most of these difficult cases involve children showing aggressive/violent behaviors—as well as sexual acting-out and criminal activities. Only around 17 percent of the local cases sent to Commissioner Tiberio were shared with the state's Council on Children and Families/[Interagency Resolution Unit](#). It was suggested that districts should send these cases to the Council despite lack of assistance to date as a way to highlight the illustrate the breadth of the problem statewide.

Commissioner Brian Hart (Chemung) noted that he had developed a Level of Care Guide to help stakeholders better understand the regulatory definitions and admission criteria for various systems (OMH/OPWDD/OASAS). This document was emailed to Commissioners on March 16.

COFCCA/IMD

The NYPWA recently met with COFCCA staff to discuss a number of issues—including Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) and the Federal Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion. NYPWA will continue to seek collaboration with COFCCA on these issues, as well as their ongoing legal [filing](#) an [Article 78 petition](#) in NYS Supreme Court to challenge foster care rates. COFCCA is seeking adequate funding to fully reimburse foster care agencies for care and maintenance costs for youth placed in the foster care system—as well as clarity surrounding state reimbursement methodologies.

Child Care Availability Task Force

NYPWA President, Commissioner Sarah Merrick (Onondaga), updated everyone on the relaunched Child Care Availability Task Force—which held its first meeting on March 13th. As in its previous incarnation, Commissioner Merrick serves as a task force member. View the meeting and other task force information at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/availability/>

The Summer Conference is Just Around the Corner!

Spring is here...and the NYPWA Summer Conference (July 16-19) will be here before you know it. We continue to seek sessions from local districts because they are the most sought after and impactful! [Click here](#) for our Call for Presentations document.

Mark Maves, Counsel to the NYPWA, is putting together a fantastic legal track—but requested districts to consider ‘volunteering’ a local attorney to conduct a possible CLE session on PINS/JD issues. He also noted that OTDA/OCFS counsel will be on hand the last day of the conference to meet with the local attorneys—so he requests they send in any topics of interest for the meeting.

Upcoming Events

Commissioners Meeting Hybrid (Albany) April 6

Commissioners’ Convening (Lake George) May 10-12

Commissioners Meeting Hybrid (Albany) June 15

NYPWA 2023 Summer Conference (Saratoga) July 16-19