



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**JAMES J. ROWLEY**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

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## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 18, 2022 PEGGY CHASE, CHAIR

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Kuhn, Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Cody, Mr. Bush  
**ALSO ATTENDING:** Mrs. Ervin, Chairman Rowley, also see attached

Chair Chase called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

1. **ADULT & LONG TERM CARE:** JoAnne Spoto Decker, Commissioner
  - a. **INFORMATIONAL: 2022 Budget Update**



*Good morning Legislator Dr. Chase and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for inviting Adult and Long Term Care Services here this morning. I am joined by our Deputy Commissioner, Maria Mahar and Unique Gamble, our Department Secretary*



*It is our pleasure to review our program year 2022 with you today*



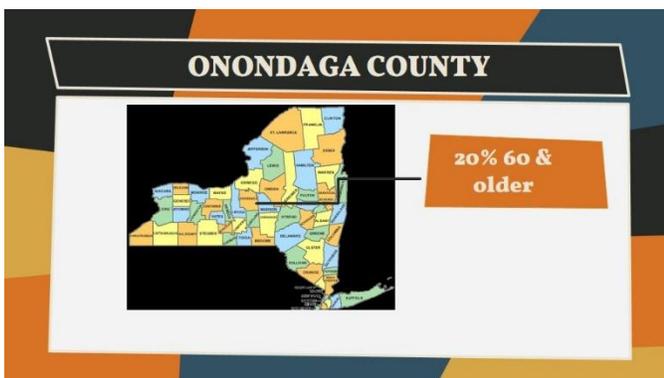
*The Department's mission is to provide support to improve the quality of life and overall well-being for adults and those with long term care needs*



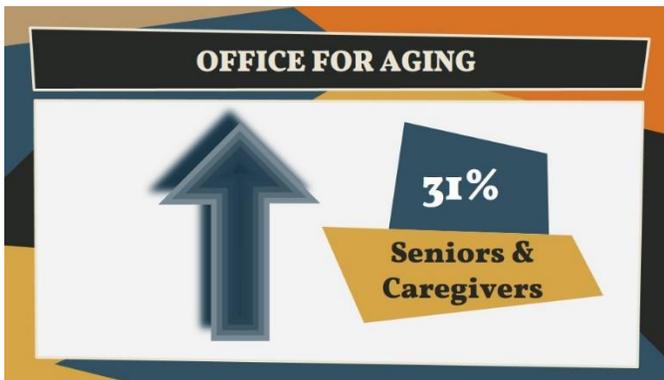
*We do that through the work of four Units. The Office for Aging, NY Connects, Adult Protective Services and the Long Term Care Resource Center*



*The first unit we are reporting on is the Office for Aging or OFA. Although we are small in staff numbers, we are honored to serve a large demographic in our county*



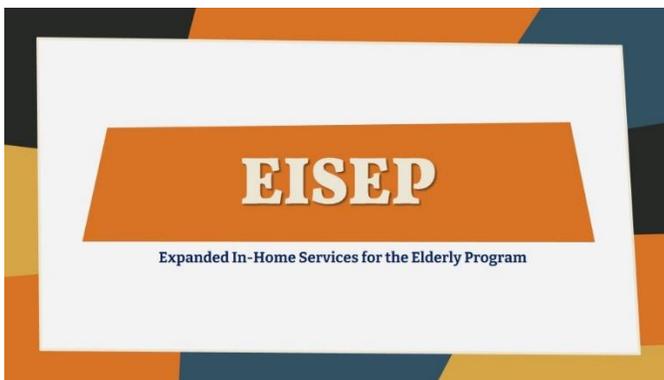
*With an estimated 20% of our population age 60 and older, the Office for Aging consistently responds to meet the diversity of needs of older adults, and their caregivers, who call Onondaga County their home*



*So far in 2022, we have served 31 % more seniors and caregivers than the same timeframe in 2021. This unit offers services, to meet the vast needs of older adults and caregivers, which can be found no other place in our Community*



*Our Nutrition Services offers meals through our 27 Senior Dining Sites and Home Delivered Meal Programs as well as Nutrition counseling*

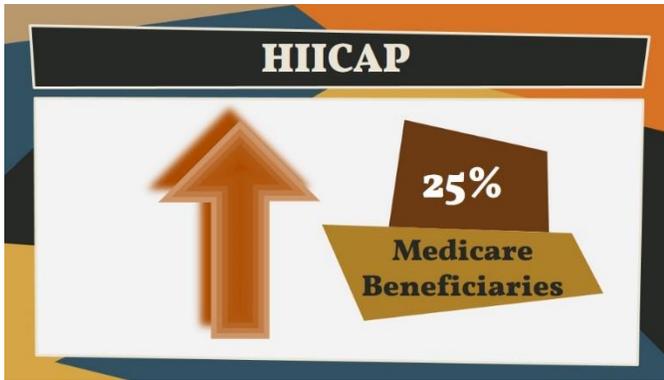


*Personal care and housekeeping is provided through our Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program*

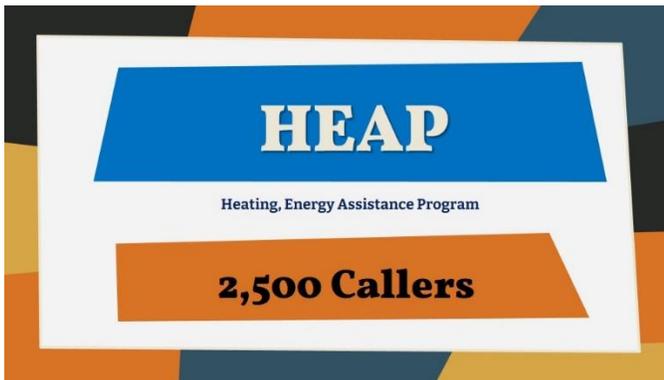


*We also provide unbiased counseling on Medicare Options through our Health Insurance Information Counseling &*

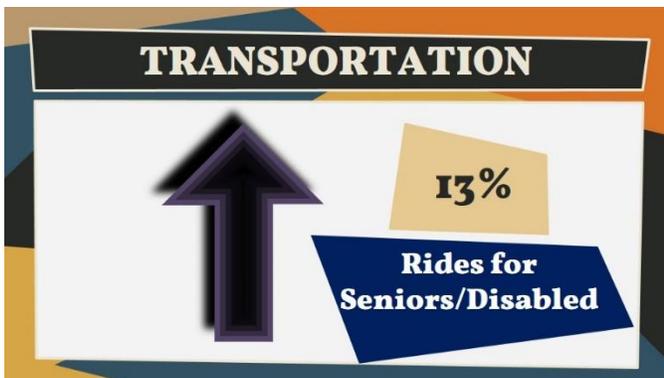
*Assistance Program (HIICAP), where Open Enrollment began on October 15*



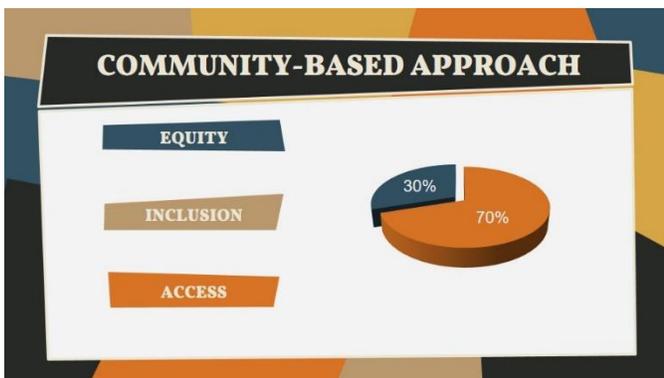
*During the first 8 months of 2022, we have served 25% more Medicare beneficiaries than served in 2021*



*We connect low-income seniors to HEAP assistance, answering, on average, approximately 2500 callers needing help*



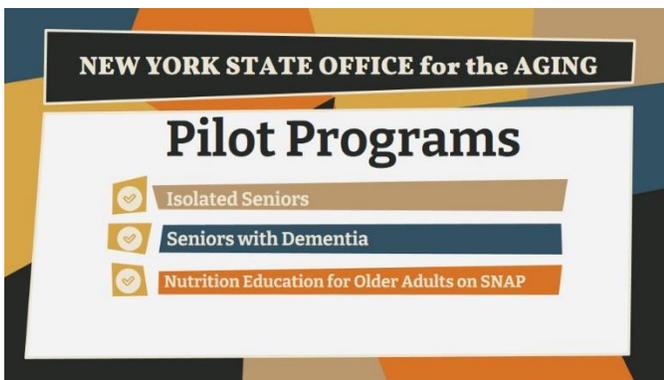
*During the first 6 months of 2022, we saw a 13 % increase in the number of rides provided to seniors and persons with disabilities*



*We believe that a community-based approach to service delivery helps us broaden our reach and ensures equity and inclusion in access to our services. As a result, more than 70% of our Office for Aging budget is subcontracted to*

*Community Based Organization's and Minority & Women Business Enterprises*

*In our 2021/22 program year, we were very proud to add SAGE Upstate and InterFaith Works to our family of community providers. These storied organizations help us to reach those older adults who have been socially and economically marginalized for a variety of reasons*



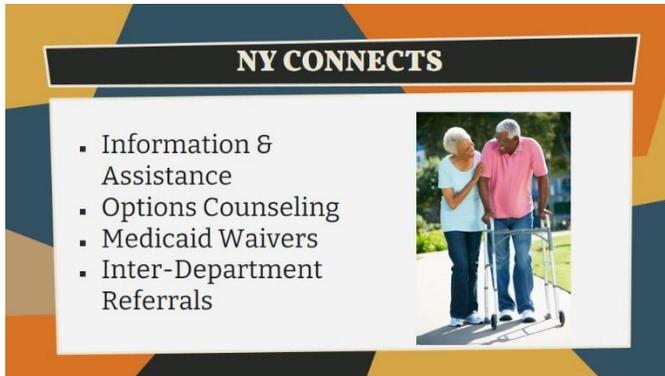
*Our Office for Aging is well respected by NYS Office for the Aging and as a result, in 2022, we have been asked to participate in a number of pilot projects, including programs and services that target isolated seniors, seniors with dementia, and targeted nutrition education for older adults who receive SNAP*



*We are pleased to report that the Office for Aging unit is on-track for expenditures for 2022 and do not foresee any fiscal concerns for the remainder of the year*



*The next unit is New York Connects*



*This unit provides information and assistance on long term care services and supports to people of any age. We offer person-centered options counseling on a variety of long-term care programs. Very often, when one thinks about long-term care, they think older adults in nursing homes but what happens in NY Connects, every day, is beyond the conventional thinking. We work with children in Medicaid Waivers, young adults who need services from OPWDD, and much more*



*In addition, we have a strong relationship with the Veterans Service Agency, where NY Connects makes referrals and vice-versa. NY Connects also works closely with ARISE, Inc. (for persons with disabilities) and DSS-ES, to help solidify a local approach in service to those who need long term care services and supports*



*There are no local dollars in the NY Connects budget. We are pleased to say that, for several years, Onondaga County NY Connects has received the highest appropriation from New York State Office for Aging other than NYC. That includes the other "Big 5", Erie, Monroe, Westchester and Suffolk and Onondaga Counties. The grant amount for 2022/23 (4/1/22-3/31/23) is \$668,436. The majority of the budget is salary. Thanks to our continued outreach of the program, we have seen 3 9% increase in the number of people contacting us for help and assistance*



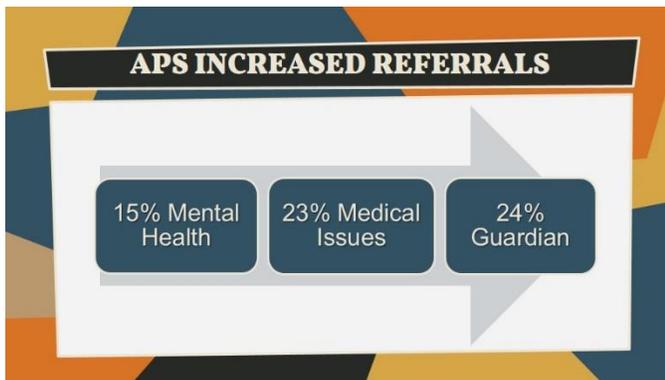
*We are pleased to report that our NY Connects unit is on track for expenditures for 2022 and do not anticipate any fiscal concerns for the remainder of the program year*



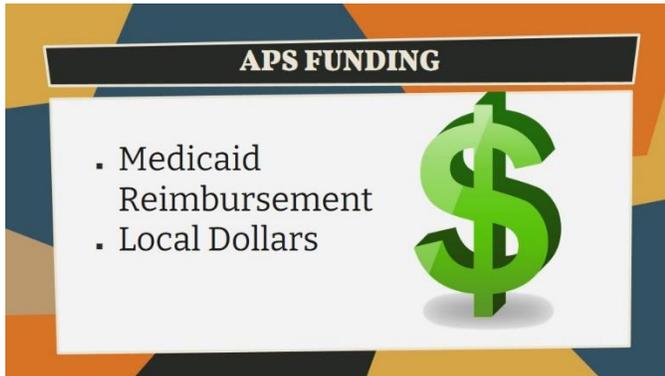
*Our next unit, Adult Protective Services (APS), a federally mandated program, is offered in every county with the goal of keeping vulnerable adults age 18 and older safely residing in the community or the least restrictive alternative*



*Adult Protective Services is unlike Children Protective Services. With children, they can be removed and a legal hearing will follow. With adults 18 and older, the legal standard is that they have a right to self-determination, unless otherwise decided by a court decision*



*APS continues to receive an increase in community referrals that range from self-neglect to financial exploitation. Since the last time we presented to this committee in 2021, we have seen an increase of 15% in referrals for adults with serious mental health challenges and a 23% increase in referrals on adults with untreated medical conditions. Today, APS has approximately 24% more guardian cases than all totaled in 2021, and that number continues to rise*



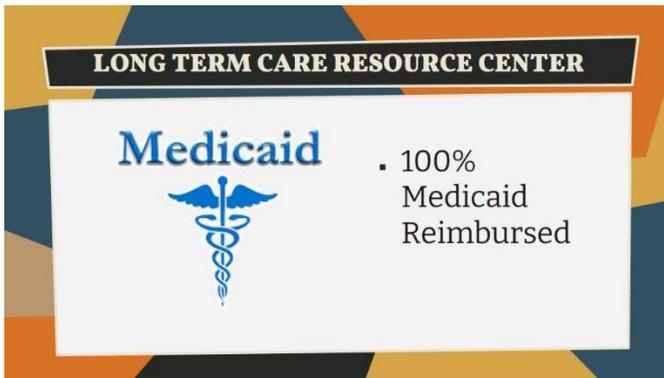
*Adult Protective Services funding consists of Medicaid reimbursement and local dollars and is included in the operating budget. The majority of the funding is for salaries. At this time we do not anticipate any fiscal concerns for the remainder of the program year*



*Our final unit is the Long Term Care Resource Center*



*This unit provides medically-based services to persons with disabilities, of any age, participating in the Medicaid program. Our staff works closely with Fiscal Intermediaries for the Consumer Directed Personal Care Program and with licensed agencies for the Personal Care Program. Our Community Health Nurses also provide assessments for persons in the community that need to have a higher level of care to meet their needs*



*The Long Term Care Resource Center funding is 100% Medicaid reimbursed. The majority of the funding is for salaries, with mileage reimbursement. For 2022, we do not anticipate any fiscal concerns for the remainder of the program year*



*On the personnel side, we have hired 13 new employees, representing 26% of our total staff*



*Tried and true favorites have returned, including Older Americans Month Senior Celebration where we spotlighted*

*three years of honorees*



*We resumed our Senior Picnic Luncheons at the Regional Farmer Market and held multiple in-person presentations and outreach activities*



*It's been a pleasure sharing the latest news with our Department. We have a busy year ahead with our core programs and services, some new partnerships and initiatives and the rebirthing of some tried and true events! We look forward to sharing these updates with you next year*



### Questions

- Is the Long Term Care Program to keep people in their homes or do you assist them with being placed in nursing homes or assisted living?
  - Place in nursing homes and assisted living depending on PRI score (Patient Review Instrument)
    - Community held nurses are licensed to do PRI
    - PRI gets disbursed to various nursing homes and/or assisted living homes
    - No charge for PRI since the beginning of Covid
  - Keep in homes as long as it is safe - must participate in Medicaid
- EISIP – Administered through Office of Aging
  - Offers personal care with a case manager but cannot participate in Medicaid
- How do you staff for programs on an Aide level?
  - Minimum wage increase provides home health aides a little grace, but not enough

- Market CDPAP (Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program) where individuals can choose their caregiver
- Caregivers can be paid to care for adult
  - 2023 will increase Consumer Directed Home Health Aides by \$2 per hour
  - Covers personal care, housekeeping, companion care, respite care
  - Starting January 2023 families will be given \$600 in federal funds, distributed through a fiduciary, to pay someone to care for adult
  - Mission is to keep adults out of nursing homes
- Is there a cap on yearly expenditures for the program?
  - Demand is increasing to stay home
  - Expenditure is task based on hours. If score 24 hours on assessment; get 24 hours of care
  - EISIP is only program that is “needs” tested based on a sliding scale
- Senior stimulus checks are going out in December 2022
- Do you have assistance for seniors to file for senior exemptions, i.e.: STAR or low income applications?
  - There are advisors who can assist with the STAR program, and are looking for a more targeted approach for 2023
  - 42 page checklist on programs and services that are offered to older adults
- Would staff be willing to come out to a senior groups in Salina?
  - As part of outreach, staff attends Q&A sessions for seniors
  - Will be at the John Carno Recreation Center, Lakeland on 11/1/22
  - Going on the road for a listening session to see what services need to be built up
- If a senior needs a ride to a medical appointment, what do they do?
  - Seniors need to have an appointment to speak with an Advisor to be qualified
- What are the pilots?
  - Interactive technology for persons with Dementia
  - Animatronic dogs and cats
    - Have 250; cost \$150 each, received free from the NYS Department of Aging
    - Dog is the size of small poodle and cat is the size of an average cat
    - ElliQ – like Alexa for older adults who live alone or are isolated
      - Interactive communication with individual
      - Contact Ellen McCauley for need of ElliQ
- Why does Onondaga County get more money than other counties?
  - Performance based – Onondaga County doing more and asking for more
- Walker Squawker – interactive bird on walker that squawks if unstable
- How does Adult Protective work? What is the process?
  - An initial call goes to Adult Protective Services (APS)
  - Goes through intake unit and gets assigned to case worker
  - Case worker will contact the source
  - If case is founded – the case worker will provide services
    - Have 60 calendar days to work the case
    - At the end of 60 days, the case remains with APS or it is closed
- Are legal services available?
  - Contract with Legal Aid
  - Work regularly with County Attorney who works guardian cases
  - Other legal issues, Legal Aid will handle
  - APS follows along until risk factors are mitigated, at which time the case would be closed
  - Onondaga County APS referrals have increased 154% over the last 10 years
- Is there an age limit?
  - Must be 18 or older
- How many openings?

- Total staffing is 52 in 2022
- Child Protective no longer transfers employees to Adult and Long Term Care
- Other than passing the Civil Service test, what are the job qualifications?
  - Case Worker - Must have BS in any degree program to qualify for the test
  - Nursing – Must have a BS in Nursing to qualify for the test
- Thank you for the partnerships with local senior centers. Increasing assistance to local communities will go a long way in order for them to help themselves
  - Transportation is an issue for seniors (mobile and immobile)
    - CENTRO has cut routes in the 13<sup>th</sup> District making it difficult for seniors
- Waiting for \$500k Grant through DOT for transportation for persons with disabilities
  - JET Program (Jordan Elbridge Transportation), Laker Limo and bus repairs are examples of what the grant funds

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**  
DATE: **OCTOBER 18, 2022**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Tammy Barber	Adult long term care
Unique Randle	Adult long term care
Steve Heald	Comptroller's Office
Maria Maha	Adult long term care
Teneshia Murphy	CE Office
Jim Bebe	Leg
John DeSantis	Leg