

**HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM #318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Jonke

Monday

6:30PM

September 12, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio and Jonke were absent. Chairwoman Sayegh was present. Chairwoman Sayegh stated Legislator Albano and Legislator Montgomery would sit on the Committee.

**Item #3 - Discussion/511 Rideshare Program/Senior Commuter Services & Mobility
Specialist Modou Cham**

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Mr. Cham provided a pamphlet to the Committee. He stated the 511 program is sponsored by the New York State Department of Transportation for public benefit. He stated it is a public benefit program, so it is available to any New York resident. He stated their goal is to improve mobility, reduce traffic congestion, and improve air quality. He stated they have a program called the Guaranteed Ride and it is meant to guarantee rides to people using sustainable commute modes, which acts as insurance for people who are vanpooling, carpooling, or taking mass transit. He stated employers can use this to ensure employees have transportation. He stated the 511 Program provides reimbursement for vanpooling, which includes tolls. He stated they also have a ride matching tool, which shows other people who are going to the same location. He stated 511 likes to connect with the major employers in the County.

Chairwoman Sayegh clarified that this resource can be used for both employees and employers.

Mr. Cham stated it is great when an employer connects with 511 because they can provide information on the various programs to the employees. He noted employers can also provide information on their employees, so that 511 can do analysis and provide suggestions on potential solutions. He reiterated that the 511 program is free.

Legislator Montgomery stated home health care resources are not available in her district because of the lack of transportation opportunities. She questioned if there is a way to connect 511 with home health aides in her area.

Mr. Cham stated it is a possibility. He stated the challenge is usually finding a cluster of people who live near each other who can rideshare together. He stated it would require 511 connecting with the health aide employers. He stated 511 can generally help any employer to strategize on

solutions both short term and long term, as well as looking into other State resources, such as electric vehicle charging stations.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if 511 can be used for residents to get to doctors' appointments.

Mr. Cham stated 511 would not do the actual driving, but would help find other resources to assist people. He explained the reason connecting with employers is such a focus is because it includes the daily commutes.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Putnam County has many residents who work outside the county. She questioned if someone in Putnam County can call 511 and get connected with someone to carpool with.

Mr. Cham stated they absolutely can. He stated 511 will provide them with a list of people who are traveling to the same place.

Legislator Albano suggested placing information on 511 on the County website.

Chairwoman Sayegh agreed and thanked Mr. Cham for attending and providing this information.

Item #4 - Discussion/The Prevention Council of Putnam/Connections Text Platform/Prevention Council Executive Director Kristin McConnell and CHESS Health CEO Hans Morefield

Executive Director McConnell stated the Prevention Council of Putnam is part of the Healing Communities Study to reduce opioid overdose deaths by 40% over three (3) years. She stated during this process they started working with CHESS Health on a closed loop referral system, Connections Text, which is free for healthcare, law enforcement, etc. to ensure that people do not fall through the cracks.

CEO Morefield presented the attached PowerPoint. He stated the main goal in their partnership with the Prevention Council is to get more individuals treatment for substance use disorders. He stated they have connected with Open Door, Arms Acres, CoveCare, and St. Christopher's Inn. He noted that the case manager at the Sheriff's Department is also now using this platform to assist people who are leaving incarceration. He stated they have not been successful at getting Putnam Hospital to utilize the Connections platform but noted this is not a unique challenge to Putnam. He stated CHESS Health does the referral work for each organization, to connect people to local peers and services. He stated the prevention aspect of the Connections platform will have self-screening. He explained some of the ways the screening progresses and can lead to treatment.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the Connections app is up and running.

CEO Morefield stated yes, it has been running for six (6) years, across the country and internationally.

Executive Director McConnell stated there is a group of local peers that is used. She stated CEO Morefield agreed that using local peers who know the community would be beneficial.

CEO Morefield stated more rural areas rely on having an online community to assist with prevention and treatment.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is easier for people to talk to a peer rather than going straight to a professional.

CEO Morefield stated the app requires people providing their information. He stated Connections Text is designed to be simpler to initiate. He stated CHES Health will reach out to someone for 30 days to try to make a connection.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how they can get the hospitals to utilize these resources.

Legislator Montgomery noted she mentioned to Putnam Hospital President Dr. Mark Hirko about providing medication at discharge.

Executive Director McConnell stated the Prevention Council suggested something similar to the hospital.

CEO Morefield stated they have offered a few different ways to the hospitals to address some of their concerns. He noted they will report back to the referring physician or whoever initiated the connection, to let them know if they were able to connect the individual with a peer or other service.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if this platform would connect people with group meetings.

CEO Morefield stated they do.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how we can have fire departments, ambulance corps and other first responders utilize this platform and how much it would cost.

Executive Director McConnell stated it depends on how much of the platform would be utilized.

CEO Morefield clarified the Connections Text platform can be used by anyone in the County.

Legislator Montgomery questioned where the peers come from.

Executive Director McConnell stated through the Healing Communities Study the Prevention Council had funding to support two (2) part time positions who are local peers. She stated they piloted with the Kent Police Department and it went really well. She stated the Prevention Council recently was awarded funding from State Senator Pete Harekham to bring on a full-time peer in October.

Legislator Montgomery questioned when the funding ends for the partnership with CHES Health.

Executive Director McConnell stated it ends December 31, 2022. She stated they are trying to find funding for 2023. She stated she put in applications for ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding and for the Opioid Settlement funding.

Legislator Montgomery stated this was a great presentation.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked Executive Director McConnell and CEO Morefield for attending.

Executive Director McConnell noted that she is meeting with the Bureau of Emergency Services soon to discuss how to assist people with substance use disorders.

Item #5 - FYI/Fund Transfer 22T198/Health Department/Nursing Malpractice Insurance Premiums Increase – Duly Noted

Item #6 - Other Business – None

Item #7 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:20 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.