

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE NAME: Joint Meeting  
PUBLIC SAFETY and HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES & AGING**

**DATE: February 24, 2011**

**Called to Order: 1:10 p.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- **for Public Safety** – Michael J. Gallagher, Chair; Dave Greenspan
- **for Health, Human Services and Aging (HHSA)** – Dan Brady, Chair; Yvonne Conwell, Pernel Jones
- **Note:** Mr. Gallagher is also a member of HHSA

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sunny Simon

**STAFF:** Joanne Gross, Senior Policy Advisor

Mr. Gallagher chaired the meeting and began with an introduction of today's topic. Council is interested in hearing from the Sheriff about medical needs in the jail and efforts to collaborate with MetroHealth to address those needs.

**Tim Oleksiak, Chief Deputy Sheriff and Christine Dubber**, Health Care Manager in the jail, addressed the committee.

The Sheriff currently contracts with Midwest Medical to provide medical (non nursing) services in the jail. Midwest Medical's contract was supposed to end in 2010; it was extended through 2011 when the Sheriff was unsuccessful at hiring an internal medical director. Midwest schedules part-time doctors to come into the jail; they arrange for general practitioners and specialists, pharmacists and dentists. All of the doctors are contract employees of Midwest Medical. Nurses in the jail are county employees; approximately 40 nurses and secretaries provide 24/7 coverage.

The Sheriff advertised for a Medical Director who would hire county doctors part-time; did not get serious candidates, so the Sheriff exercised the option to extend Midwest for another year at approximately \$1.8M per year. The Sheriff attempted discussions with Metro assuming medical services in the jail; discussions fell through. Midwest Medical has indicated that it intends to go out of business at the end of the year.

Metro declined because they said they did not have the expertise to provide jail medical service. Prison medicine is not a specialty but the population is particularly challenging. There are more restrictions and a strict formulary; certain meds cannot be ordered because they could be used as contraband. The patients are more manipulative than others seen in a regular medical practice.

There are a limited number of physicians who can do this kind of work. The Medical Director position has been advertised on the county website; hasn't drawn many candidates. While doctors may be willing to work part-time in the prison/jail environment, they may not want to be the medical director. Inmates tend to sue more.

The trend is for institutions to hire their own medical director. The doctors needed are almost like ER docs; the jail brings in 200 new inmates per day; many of them have complicated health and mental health issues which have not been addressed.

Because we do not have electronic medical records, we cannot readily verify medications or conditions; we have worked with the court's mental health docket but we have to take the time to get people the right medications; this is a difficult population to manage

The Sheriff's staff believes the best way to provide services would be to have a county employed medical director; believe we could manage patients better; and with an outside contractor, some of the lawsuits have been more adversarial than we would like.

Midwest Medical has provided services by contract since 1995; before then Metro doctors were providing services in the jail

**The Sheriff's department was asked if Council could have some historical information about medical services going back about 20-25 years.**

It was noted that the state prison system hires its own medical staff; the sheriff's department is unsure of what Franklin and Hamilton County do. Also noted was that there are other national companies that provide these services, but they are very expensive.

Resources would help the jail to provide services. When fully staffed, the jail medical system operates better; it is difficult to hire qualified nursing staff because the pay at hospitals is so much better. The Medical Director position was posted at \$160K; that was probably not high enough to attract good candidates

The Sheriff's department would like Metro to be more involved; would like their assistance with hiring the medical director and with electronic medical records. Metro's clients are the sheriff's clients; would like Metro's help with the purchase of pharmaceuticals because hospitals get the cheapest price on drugs; one HIV drug could be had at 40% less than sheriff currently pays if we could go through Metro; if we could work with Metro on lab test and x-rays which are currently contracted out, it would cost less and put money back into Metro.

If Midwest is not going to remain in business and we cannot find a medical director, Sheriff will have to have RFP for medical services on the street by June in order to have services in by January 2012.

Currently the jail is paying \$782,000 for pharma and \$120,000 for supplies; we believe we could save up to \$200,000 if Metro would purchase pharma/supplies for the jail. Juvenile court has a separate contract with another provider for pharmaceuticals.

Midwest pays their employee costs; the county is self-insured for nursing malpractice.

In response to comments about easier issues, it was noted that Metro did not decline to provide pharmaceuticals/supplies and assistance with medical records, but declined solely to provide medical doctors for the jail. The other conversations could be continued while the medical doctor issue is explored more fully.

The jail has a good working relationship with Metro; pregnant females go to Metro for services and to deliver; high-risk patients are also seen at Metro. Deputies may have to wait longer at Metro than at Charity, which is the other hospital to which inmates are sent; currently have 2 patients at both hospitals

It was suggested that the county work on enhancing the relationship with Metro; given the change in government, the county may need to reach out. **Mr. Gallagher suggested that a meeting between Mr. Brady, himself, the County Executive's office and Metro representatives might be in order to see if some progress on these issues can be made.** The Sheriff's department also noted that it would be willing to share its AFIS system with Metro to assist them in identifying people.

Mr. Brady: Metro has been invited to a future HHSA committee meeting; he would prefer that focus on general Metro issues and concerns and not on this particular topic.

In response to a questions about lawsuits, it was noted that Cuyahoga County has a good history over the past 11 years or so; and a much better history of deaths in custody than Franklin and Hamilton counties; one major lawsuit over a death that resulted in significant liability for the county.

**Mr. Gallagher: Judge Gallagher would be provided information shared today.**

**Mr. Ivory said he would follow up on the suggestion that a meeting be arranged.**

Meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.