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6 NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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8 RICHARD NICOLELLO

9 PRESIDING OFFICER

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11 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

12 COMMITTEE

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14 LEGISLATOR ROSE MARIE WALKER

15 CHAIR

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18 Theodore Roosevelt Building

19 1550 Franklin Avenue

20 Mineola, New York

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22

23 November 15, 2021

24 2:59 P.M.

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2     A P P E A R A N C E S:

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4     LEGISLATOR ROSE MARIE WALKER

5                     Chair

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7     LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY

8                     Vice Chair

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10    LEGISLATOR LAURA SCHAEFER

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12    LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR

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14    LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

15                     Ranking member

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17    LEGISLATOR ARNOLD DRUCKER

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19    LEGISLATOR JOSHUA LAFAZAN

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2 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I would like  
3 to call the Health and Social Services  
4 Committee to order and ask the clerk to please  
5 take the roll.

6 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Can  
7 I just mention we have two substitutions.  
8 Legislator Birnbaum is going to substitute for  
9 Legislator Drucker, and Legislator Bynoe is  
10 going to substitute for Legislator Lafazan.

11 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Did you get  
12 that Mr. Pulitzer?

13 MR. PULITZER: Yes, I did. Thank  
14 you. Health and Social Services Committee  
15 roll call. Legislator Ellen Birnbaum  
16 substituting for Legislator Arnold Drucker.

17 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Here.

18 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Bynoe  
19 substituting for Legislator Lafazan.

20 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

21 MR. PULITZER: Ranking Member  
22 Delia DeRiggi-Whitton.

23 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
24 Here.

25 MR. PULITZER: Legislator C.

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2 William Gaylor III.

3 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Present.

4 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Laura  
5 Schaefer.

6 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Here.

7 MR. PULITZER: Vice Chairman  
8 James Kennedy.

9 MR. ARNOLD: Here.

10 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Rose  
11 Marie Walker.

12 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

13 MR. PULITZER: We have a quorum  
14 ma'am.

15 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Thank you  
16 very much. There are two items on the agenda  
17 today. The first is clerk item 382-21, which  
18 is an ordinance supplemental to the annual  
19 appropriation ordinance in connection with the  
20 medical examiner's office.

21 A motion please. By Legislator  
22 Schaefer. Seconded by Legislator Bynoe.

23 MR. PERSICH: Good afternoon.  
24 Andy Persich, Office of Management and  
25 Budget. This item is a supplemental

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2 appropriation in the amount of \$33,801 for  
3 enhanced postmortem toxicology testing with  
4 relation to opioid deaths. It's additional  
5 grant funding that the medical examiner's  
6 office has received this year from the state.

7 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Are there any  
8 other questions or comments? I don't know,  
9 since you're not actually from the medical  
10 examiner's office, but I would just be  
11 wondering if they found this year, especially  
12 due to COVID, that there was an increase in  
13 opioid deaths? I just would be interested in  
14 finding that out.

15 MR. PERSICH: I am substituting  
16 Legislator Walker just so you know but I'm  
17 sure they can get you that information.

18 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I didn't  
19 expect you to have that answer.

20 MR. PERSICH: I do know that  
21 during the pandemic with those calls there was  
22 not a lot of talk about opioids. It was more  
23 about COVID. But I'm sure there's more.

24 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Because I  
25 know we did have a lot more opioid deaths and

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2 I'm sure they ended up going to the medical  
3 examiner's office.

4 MR. PERSICH: I'll see if I can  
5 get that information for you.

6 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Any other  
7 questions or comments from the legislators?  
8 Any public comment? All in favor of clerk  
9 item 382-21 signify by saying aye. Any  
10 opposed? Any abstentions? No. It moves on  
11 to Finance.

12 The second is clerk item 387-21  
13 which is an ordinance supplemental to the  
14 annual appropriation ordinance in connection  
15 with the health department. We have Mary  
16 Ellen Laurain.

17 Motion please by Legislator  
18 Kennedy. Seconded by Legislator Birnbaum.

19 MS. LAURAIN: Good afternoon.  
20 Mary Ellen Laurain, Department of Health.  
21 Item 387-21 is a supplemental appropriation.  
22 It's for \$1,718,260. This is for our COVID-19  
23 vaccination response and it's funded by the  
24 New York State Department of Health as federal  
25 transfer of funds.

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2 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Any  
3 questions? Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton.

4 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I  
5 just want to say first of all thank you Mary  
6 Ellen. You're always my go to person with the  
7 board of health and I really appreciate your  
8 assistance.

9 Do you have any idea how they're  
10 going to -- I see this is going to be focused  
11 on minority groups to increase the  
12 accessibility for people with disabilities as  
13 well.

14 MS. LAURAIN: I believe that's 20  
15 percent of the funding will be targeted  
16 outreach to minority communities which we are  
17 currently doing as well. Just to boost  
18 vaccination rates.

19 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I  
20 was just wondering how they were going to --  
21 it would be good to be kept informed as to how  
22 they're doing it. If there's any way that our  
23 office could help. I know we discussed this,  
24 but do you know if this is also going to  
25 include increasing the availability for the

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2 vaccines for children?

3 MS. LAURAIN: I don't know that  
4 offhand. We are not a Pfizer provider, so I'm  
5 not sure. Of course there could always be  
6 changes. It's flexibility.

7 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
8 That's a good point. It's only approved for  
9 30 percent of the Pfizer dose, correct?

10 MS. LAURAIN: Right. And the  
11 vaccine is readily available in pediatric  
12 offices and pharmacies.

13 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I'm  
14 hearing all different things. I don't know.  
15 I have a community that has just really  
16 focused on this and they're calling all the  
17 different pharmacies and each pharmacy is  
18 saying they're not available yet. Stop and  
19 Shop doesn't have them.

20 MS. LAURAIN: Starting today New  
21 York State is doing the five to 11 year olds  
22 in I think SUNY Old Westbury, Stony Brook and  
23 I think, don't quote me, I think Aqueduct.  
24 And of course if there's demand it can always  
25 be expanded.



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2 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: It's  
3 really a good point unless they change the  
4 conditions for Moderna the county really can't  
5 get involved at this point?

6 MS. LAURAIN: I don't know in the  
7 future if we will. Right now we are not  
8 providing.

9 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Do  
10 you know why we can't administer Pfizer?

11 MS. LAURAIN: It's more related  
12 to the storage and the handling of it. It's  
13 much easier for us to do the Moderna when  
14 we're at certain sites. And J and J.

15 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Because the  
16 Pfizer is the one that has to be kept at a  
17 very low temperature.

18 MS. LAURAIN: I believe there  
19 were changes to the way it has to be kept.  
20 But it's easier when we are at locations to do  
21 Moderna.

22 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I'm sure  
23 you'll keep us updated if there are any  
24 changes.

25 MS. LAURAIN: Certainly.

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2 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Legislator  
3 Birnbaum.

4 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Has the  
5 county already received the funding from the  
6 state?

7 MS. LAURAIN: Yes.

8 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Did we  
9 apply for this amount?

10 MS. LAURAIN: We've been  
11 continuously receiving money from the state  
12 for COVID response. This wasn't like we had  
13 to apply for it. I believe the way it's  
14 disbursed is based on population.

15 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: So it seems  
16 to be an adequate amount for our COVID  
17 response?

18 MS. LAURAIN: We've been  
19 continuously getting funds from -- it's  
20 federal pass through money.

21 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Have we found  
22 because I know earlier we tried to focus on  
23 certain communities where we felt that there  
24 was still a large number that have not been  
25 vaccinated and I guess sometimes their

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2 response wasn't what we had hoped it would  
3 be. That more people would come out.

4 MS. LAURAIN: We do review the  
5 data to see where there are pockets and need  
6 and we continuously -- we'll do -- we really  
7 partnered with leaders in the community who  
8 have trust in the community. Like, for  
9 example, on MLK day we did a pod that was  
10 successful at I think it was the Union Baptist  
11 Church in Hempstead and we partnered with the  
12 pastor who had trust and got vaccinated as  
13 well that day. We're trying to continue to  
14 increase our partnerships which have been very  
15 successful. We do have the highest  
16 vaccination rate in the state and probably the  
17 country. I think we're number two.

18 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Because I  
19 know in a lot of what you read and not that  
20 I'm saying whatever you read is always true,  
21 but I know there are many people I guess that  
22 are afraid to go because possibly they're  
23 undocumented or whatever. And I know that's  
24 not a question that's ever asked. So I guess  
25 working with the local community leaders is

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2 the best way because if they trust somebody  
3 they're going to -- they might not believe me  
4 that I say that but they would believe  
5 somebody who they know and have faith in.

6 MS. LAURAIN: We don't ask that  
7 and we try to promote that message --

8 LEGISLATOR WALKER: As much as we  
9 possibly can.

10 MS. LAURAIN: -- with the media  
11 of course. But in the community and the  
12 community leadership is always helpful to us.

13 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any other  
14 questions for Mary Ellen? Any public  
15 comment? I too would like to thank you for  
16 especially always here for us, always here to  
17 answer all our questions but during COVID it's  
18 been especially difficult and not always an  
19 easy time for any of you. Thank you very  
20 much.

21 That's the last business we have on  
22 the calendar today. All in favor of item  
23 387-21 signify by saying aye. Any opposed?  
24 Any abstain? Moves on to Finance.

25 There's no other business before

1                   Health - 11-15-21  
2    this committee. May I have a motion to  
3    adjourn. Legislator Schaefer and seconded by  
4    Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton. All in favor of  
5    adjourning signify by saying aye. This  
6    committee is adjourned and Finance is next.

7                   (Committee adjourned at 3:08 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, FRANK GRAY, a Notary  
Public in and for the State of New  
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and  
accurate transcript of my stenographic  
notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have  
hereunto set my hand this 18th day of  
November 2021.

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FRANK GRAY