***SHC Membership:***

*MaineHousing*

*Maine Department of Health & Human Services:*

* *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS)*
* *Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS)*

*Maine Department of Corrections (DOC)*

*Maine Bureau of Veterans Services*

*Region I Reps:*

* *Cheryl Harkins*
* *Donna Yellen*
* *Vacant*

*Region II Reps:*

* *Cullen Ryan, Acting Chair*
* *Donna Kelley*
* *Elise Johansen*

*Region III Reps:*

* *Josh D’Alessio*
* *David McClusky*
* *Tracey Hair*

*Statewide Homeless Council*

*c/o MaineHousing*

*353 Water Street*

*Augusta, ME 04333*

**March 12, 2019**

**9:30 AM to 2:00 PM**

**Location: MaineHousing, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine**

**SHC meets regularly the second Tuesday of each month**

**Members:** Cullen Ryan (RII), Josh D’Alessio (RIII), David McClusky (RIII), Donna Yellen (RI), Tracey Hair (RIII), Chet Barnes (DHHS-SAMHS), Donna Kelley (RII), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Cheryl Harkins (RI), Elise Johansen (RII).

Members not able to attend:

**Guests:** Ginny Dill (Shalom House), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Rich Hooks Wayman (VOA), Alice Preble (DHHS-OCFS), Tia Knowlton-Basford (MaineHousing), David Simpson (DOC), Chris Arbor (DOC), Susan Gagnon (DOC), Pat Delahanty (DOC), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Scott Sergi (PCHC), Jamie Blackburn (CHS), Brian Townsend (Amistad), Erin Kelly (Preble Street), Ruth Lawson-Stopps (MaineHousing), Alison Gallagher (MaineHousing), Jenny Stasio (Through These Doors), Randall Liberty (DOC Commissioner).

**Minutes:** Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

**Minutes** from February were approved as submitted.

**Statewide Homeless Council Updates:** Cullen presented a proposed letterhead with tagline, and sample of a proposed new SHC Agenda, with a list of all members and a shorter meeting time. It was well received. Cullen is working with the new administration to formalize a number of SHC appointments. We currently have one vacancy for R1. Cullen met with Commissioner Lambrew and covered as much information as he could in the short time available about homeless populations, data, and how best to end homelessness for each subpopulation, the SHC, the RHCs, the Plan, Resource Prioritization, DHHS Blueprint, the MCOC and HUD funding, how to get everyone pushing in the same direction, and how DHHS can best help to end and prevent homelessness in Maine.

-Vickey then introduced the new [www.MaineSHC.org](http://www.MaineSHC.org) website. This is still a work in progress, and comments and suggestions are welcome. There was a **MOTION** to adopt this as the official Statewide Homeless Council website. During discussion there were several questions about who owns the site, who will operate and maintain it, and who decides what does or does not get posted there. Currently, CHOM is the owner, but they are more than happy to hand it over to MaineHousing as the designated ‘support’ for SHC. Access and logistics can be handled much as they were for the mainehomelessplanning site. The motion **PASSED**. All thanked Vickey for her work in creating this.

-The Resources Prioritization Chart has been revised to remove the numbers (P1, P2, P3, etc.) that several people had expressed concerns about as it seemed to imply a ranked order based on population type. People liked the new format and the increased emphasis on vulnerability, along with length of time homeless. Still need to update some of the numbers based on more current data. If anyone has further suggestions, please contact Cullen or Lauren.

**Policy Committee Updates: Federal:** The new proposed federal budget would limit or eliminate SNAP benefits for some populations, including those who are unemployed or under employed and not able to document work hours. There was a **MOTION** that SHC send a letter to our delegation opposing this proposal**. PASSED.**

**State:** Last month it was suggested we try to focus on a “Top 5” list of the most important and relevant legislative actions, rather than try to cover every single one. Cullen managed to get it down to 7. His list summarizing these proposals was distributed at the meeting and will be attached to these minutes. Cullen outlined each of the seven proposals including why they are relevant to the work of the SHC, and a **MOTION** was made that the SHC should express support for these 7 Bills. During discussion members pointed out that there were parts of some of these that did not appear to be well informed or well thought out, and that we might need to take a more nuanced approach that allowed us to support the positive elements without it having to be ‘All or Nothing’. Others felt SHC could take a big picture approach to support these, and individual agencies could address specific areas of concern. The motion **PASSED** with three members abstaining. Cullen also presented a one-page ‘Fact Sheet on Homelessness’. A few minor edits were suggested followed by a **MOTION** to approve, as amended, for general distribution. **PASSED**.

**Veterans By-Name List Update:** Erin reported that there are currently 109 Veterans on the list, 13 of those being unsheltered, and they have house 8 more veterans in the last 30 days. The total here includes veterans who are currently residing in GPD Transitional Housing programs.

**Long Term Stayer Updates:** Portlandhas now housed 226 LTS with a 93.78%rate. Eleven LTS were housed in the month on February. Bangor now has 11 people who qualify as LTS, the most in a very long time, though all have Shelter Plus Care applications in the works. Tedford has 4 Adults and 1 family. HOME, Inc. has 2 individuals, both with vouchers in hand.

**Regional Homeless Councils:** **RI**: Discussed new Portland shelter proposal, communicable disease outbreaks among homeless populations, assessing crisis services, the tight rental market, and that some landlords are requiring co-signers for BRAP (they are not supposed to do that). Also, seeking nominations to fill Elizabeth’s SHC Representative position. **RII**: Discussed legislative updates, project updates, increase in the number of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities needing shelter, lack of affordable housing, unsheltered people going to hospitals to get out of the cold, lack of shelters for those medically compromised, concerns about the number of “off the grid” shelters in the Lewiston area, and in other places, that operate with little or no oversight. **RIII**: Bangor Library is training staff about working with people who are homeless, lack of affordable housing, landlords not accepting vouchers or GA, and increased coordination with local jails on reentry.

**MCOC Updates:** NOFA Scores have been released. MCOC scored 144. Not as good as we would have liked. The Debriefing information was not very helpful, but we know a few areas we can improve on in the next round. Coordinated Entry is being re-built from the ground up. Currently seeking input from the Shelter Director’s group.

**Population discussions: In conjunction with the new Agenda and Meeting formats, Cullen asked that a point person representing each population provide a brief update each month.**

**DV:** Working with the new database. MCEDV will soon be hiring someone to help develop their DV specific Coordinated Entry. That person will be attending this and other meetings as well. Elise will provide regular updates.

**Single Adults:** Largely covered in the LTS report. Erin will cover this and Veterans.

**Families:** Tracey reported thatHOME, Inc. Family units are full, as are most of the other shelters that serve families.

**Veterans:** Covered in the BNL report.

**Youth:**  The Youth Provider Group now has ‘staff’ taking meeting notes – Dave will see that those are provided to SHC as a monthly update. Numbers at Shaw House are currently down, and they are moving more youth from their TH program into their own apartments. Preble Street youth numbers are up.

**Rental Subsidy Updates:** BRAP currently has no waitlist. Shelter Plus Care has some movement but is still slow. DV and family referrals must still meet other criteria to be eligible for Shelter Plus Care. The HCV/Section 8 centralized waitlist is averaging 100 draws each month. MaineHousing is still putting resources toward the Home To Stay program for homeless referrals. Overall voucher utilization is around 40% and there are about 200 people searching at any given time. MaineHousing’s HCV Department is now overseeing the STEP program and they are seeing a lot of referrals that are outside the recommended VI-SPDAT guidelines.

**Maine Shelter Network:** (formerly known as the Shelter Directors Meeting) focusing on establishing priorities for the new year, including better attendance and increased networking with the Continuum.

**DHHS –SAMHS: BRAP-** no wait list! **PATH**- hope to have three contracts in place soon. **S+C**- new contracts with HUD are signed. **ICM** trainings, working with DOC on reentry planning. **PNMI**- developing 80 new beds in the next 12 months. Need to identify a medical necessity. **Recovery Coaches-** trainingsare being developed, along with Narcan distribution planning. **MaineCare Expansion** - has hit the 10,000 mark. Opening a new call center soon.

**DHHS** -**OCFS:** New RFP for Youth Experiencing Homelessness to be out soon. Current contracts extended up to June 30 will be extended again until new contracts are in place for October.

**MaineHousing Updates:** Ruth Lawson-Stopps is now the new Director of Homeless Initiatives at MaineHousing. She is very excited to be here and will be making the rounds in April to visit with people and programs across the state. MaineHousing has contracted with HRSI to conduct a statewide Gaps and Needs Analysis – they will be contacting shelters and other programs over the next few months. We are looking at possible changes – improvements – to ESHAP and the Shelter Rule. Also working on ways to increase and improve access to LIHTC properties for homeless program referrals.

**DOC:** Cullen enthusiastically welcomed several Department of Corrections personnel to the meeting today and expressed hope that we would work together to develop a Blueprint outlining how best to address the often-overlapping issues, and populations, that we all work with. This led to a lengthy and detailed discussion that Vickey captured in her notes which I will attach to these minutes rather than try to duplicate the conversation here. At the end of the discussion Commissioner Liberty invited the Council to visit the Maine State Prison in Warren and offered to provide a tour of the facility and host a SHC meeting. It was quickly decided that the April 9th SHC meeting would be held there. Anyone planning to attend will need to provide their full name and Date of Birth to Scott and be approved by the DOC. There are some very strict rules about what and cannot be brought and/or worn while visiting.

**Affordable Housing:** Even when people have vouchers they often cannot find housing. Portland GA rates have gone up, but even an SRO unit is now over $1000 a month. Many landlords still view renting to the populations we work with as a risk – we need to do more outreach and engagement with them around Navigator services. Shared Housing and Co-Housing are options that other parts of the county are using more. Not everyone needs or wants their own 1 BR unit. Need to work with municipalities on issues around occupancy, parking requirements, gentrification, and Airbnbs. Cullen recently met with Portland City officials about paying to bring a unit up to HQS in return for making it available to a voucher holder. Tracey had a client about to be evicted due to accumulated garbage in the yard – there is no curbside pick-up, the dump is miles away, and they did not have a car. She was able to get the town to authorize a dumpster for the building! Need to revamp Rent Smart trainings on how to be a good tenant and have similar educational efforts for Landlords on how to work with tenants and navigators. This could be part of Re-entry planning too. MaineHousing is developing on-line Rent Smart courses that could be accessed by many partnering agencies.

**Next Press Release:** Re-entry and homelessness

**Other Business:** Still need to revisit the Shelter Funding Formula

**Next meeting will be April 9, 2019 at the Maine State Prison in Warren.**

DOC Blueprint – Brainstorm 3/12/19

* Hospitals, MH, corrections – common thread: Need assessment of housing needs upon entry to avoid being discharged without a subsidy.
  + If a housing assessment was done upon entry, needs and rental subsidy eligibility could be identified, and people could at least be discharged with a voucher in hand.
    - For BRAP this would involve a clinician signing off regarding qualifying for Section 17.
      * Would need access to KEPRO / ability to administer LOCUS
      * ICMs can help coordinate this in the jails.
  + People may already be connected with community providers and have assessments of their mental health and eligibility, they just need the dots to be connected while they’re incarcerated.
  + There are a lot of internal barriers to the continuity of care within the DOC.
  + Housing assessments can be even more simple: Do you have a place to go upon discharge?
* Lack of first month’s rent is a barrier to housing placements upon discharge.
* Data sharing is essential to successful discharge planning.
  + This is not mental health or SUD information – this should be barrier-free data sharing
  + Avoid working in silos to share names and histories of inmate lists to improve outcomes
* Need a measurable way to demonstrate the quantitative effect of reductions in reincarcerations/recidivism.
* Discharges for corrections for people with opioid use disorder (OUD) come with the added concern for a fatal overdose upon use after discharge due to decreased tolerance.
  + Master leasing programs with case managers administering MAT can be successful housing models for people with OUD after discharge as it eliminates a lot of barriers and decreases the chances of fatal overdoses.
* Medicaid-supported housing (being modeled in Massachusetts)
  + Medicaid waivers can providers the services associated with supportive housing
* Need to improve the flow of support to avoid gaps in services during incarceration.
  + **Fund navigators who are experts in the prisons/jails as well as the communities who can flow back and forth.**
    - **This is where ICMs would be key.**
* Probation Officers aren’t experts in all of this – **ICMs are key, trusted liaisons, and are a missing link.** 
  + Make ICMs resource hubs.
  + ICMs used to come to their offices weekly and this allowed networking and case conferencing.
  + The system needs people who are experts who can do the work.
  + The ICM program is under new supervision, opening the door for improvement and collaboration.
    - ICMs can help make transfers to community resources.
    - ICMs can help with applications while incarcerated, follow the person through into the community.
  + PATH can help connect people with housing and mainstream resources for people who are homeless in the community.
  + Have programs such as PATH and ICMs work together.
* Coordinate regional trainings, including available resources and how to access them, so everyone is on the same page.
* There are some prevention resources for certain populations that could be utilized for people prior to release (i.e. continue rent payments while someone is in jail for a short period of time to avoid eviction).
* Coordinating efforts is key.
* By-Name List meetings offer prime opportunities for coordination and communication.
  + Having ICMs attend By-Name List meetings would be extremely beneficial.
* Recovery-oriented housing – regulate or not?
  + Yes and no – there are many dynamics at play.
  + Investigate the reasons why some sober housing across Maine doesn’t appear well run.
  + For someone exiting prison/jail a sober house may be a better option that a shelter.
  + MAT is extremely important.
  + National Association for Recovery Residences affiliation is looked at and preferred by Corrections.
  + The recovery community acts as great support system and can help deter reincarceration.
  + Develop a State alliance for sober housing, which can develop state guidelines amongst the collaborative of people running recovery housing and the State to balance the needs of people in the housing.
    - Maine Association for Recovery Residences has its own grassroots standards.
  + Probation Officers are present in sober housing and have developed relationships with the landlords and residents.
  + People who come from recovery residences that provide an array of support services are far more successful in housing but you can seldom can utilize subsidies in recovery residences.
    - Lack of best practices / standards has been a barrier to using rental assistance in recovery-oriented housing.
      * Examine and explain the differences between recovery residences and sober houses
    - There are ongoing legislative efforts to create housing subsidies for recovery residences.
  + There has been a lot of focus on OUD, but this shouldn’t preclude paying attention to other substance use disorders affecting the population.
    - Data shows that the substances used across the state varies.
* There are public and private silos.
  + Engage the public and private sectors.
* Use data from DOC to convene employers most likely to engage people upon discharge to have an interactive dialogue.
* MaineCare expansion is huge for people exiting correctional facilities.
  + Access to services is key, MaineCare expansion has increased this and removed barriers to services.
  + Need to connect MaineCare upon discharge.
    - Maine is a “suspend state” not a “terminate state,” thus MaineCare can more easily be reactivated before discharge.
  + Basic healthcare is the number one stabilizing factor, after housing, for people.
  + Ability to hire all of the staff needed to care for people with MaineCare expansion is a barrier and will affect capacity/availability of services.
    - Workforce development across the system is an issue and needs to be examined.
    - Agencies will all be looking at the same pool of people (ICMs, Probation Officers, Case Managers, etc.).
* The Maine Prisoner Re-Entry Network is a good, replicable model.
  + Engagement and relationship work helps connect the dots and helps people access community and mainstream resources upon discharge.
* Have a DOC dedicated, legislatively approved budget line-item for re-entry.
* The multitude of unknown regarding sentencing in the county jails is a barrier.
  + Pre-sentence / pre-trial cases are problematic because housing and support networks are not addressed prior to discharge.
  + Not having set release dates (early releases and delayed releases) is problematic for planning and continuity of care.
  + Pre-adjudication and pre-conviction work would assist with the sentencing issues.
  + The volume and turnover in the jails compounds all of these issues
    - These are the people everyone is serving because they’re ricocheting through all of the aspects of the system.
* Transfers to other facilities due to overcrowding, warrants in other counties, etc. disrupts work being done with people who are incarcerated.
  + This greatly complicates injections for people with OUD while they are incarcerated prior to release.
  + Build relationships with sheriffs and ICMs, and work with the county jails to mitigate county jail transfers to ensure continuity of services.
  + Engage sheriffs’ departments and invite them to the RHCs.
  + The Maine Sheriff’s Association Conference in April (4/17-4/19) and/or the monthly Maine Sheriff’s Association meetings would be great opportunities for engagement.
* Engage with the DA offices to connect the legal dots as well.
* Cumberland County Project Re-Entry is a great program but dependent on capacity in housing.
* Include Rent Smart training in corrections settings for improved housing outcomes upon discharge.
* Hold the next SHC meeting at the Maine State Prison.
  + The 4/9/19 meeting will be held at the Maine State Prison (807 Cushing Road, Warren, ME) to get an in-person perspective before further diving into the Blueprint.
  + Prison tour: 9:30-11:30am; SHC meeting 11:30am-2:30pm. Lunch to be provided.