**MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL**

**February 9, 2021**

**9:30-12:30**

**Minutes**

**Virtual Location** [**https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1494236342?pwd=MHE2NW9vMnV6WWhrNjEzZjlodzZ6dz09**](https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1494236342?pwd=MHE2NW9vMnV6WWhrNjEzZjlodzZ6dz09) **Or Telephone: 1(646)3573664**

**Members:** Stephanie Primm (KCHC, SHC Chair), Donna Kelley (WCAP, RII), Cullen Ryan (CHOM, RII), Cheryl Harkins (HVJ, RI), Josh D’Alessio (PCHC, RIII), Tracey Hair (HOME, Inc., RIII), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Alice Preble, (DHHS/OCFS), David McCluskey (Shaw House, RIII) and Donna Yellen (Preble Street RI)

**Guests:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Tracy Allen (KBH), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Melanie Buber (HSA), Rota Knott (Tedford), Jamie Blackburn (CSH), Jenny Stasio (TTD), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Anna Smith (CSH), Sarah Gallagher (CSH), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Sara Wade (SAMHS, DHHS), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Anna Brewer (HVJ), Christina Dingus (MaineHousing), Erin Kelly (Preble Street), Shawn Yardley (Community Concepts), Katie Spencer-White (MMHS), Mike Shaughnessy (MaineHousing), Norm Maze (Shalom House), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Kenneth Capron (Memory Works),), Wes Phiney (YCSPI), Teague Morris (Senator King’s Office), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Richard Hooks Wayman (VOA), Emily Flinkstrom (Fairtides), Rindy Fogler (City of Bangor, Kate Easter (MCEDV), Heidi Rackliffe (ACAP), Lisa Letourneau (CDC), Bill Crandell, (WMCA), Krystal Williams (Provident Group), Natalie Evans Blake (Bridges of Hope), Randy Folger), Leanna Amaez (CDC), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Anne Pringle (Friends of Deering Oaks), Meredith Pesce (Amistad) andSybil Mazerolle (DHHS)

**Minutes:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing) and Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

**Welcome:** Stephanie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance. Cullen motioned to approve January’s minutes. Bill Higgins seconded. January’s minutes were approved.

**CDC Update:** Lisa Letourneau announced shelter staff are considered front line essential workers placing them in Phase 1B of vaccine distribution. She explained 14 days after the second vaccine dose people do not need to be quarantined if exposed to the virus. To help combat fears, answer questions and inform staff about the vaccine, Lisa is available to facilitate an educational zoom meeting for up to 125 people.

**Equitable Distribution and Uptake of Covid-19 Vaccine:** Krystal Williams & Leanna Amaez, CDC, at the state level, are researching the barriers people experiencing homelessness are facing with vaccine distribution in order to educate the public on vaccine hesitancy and develop an equitable distribution process.

Attendees shared these barriers and voiced these tangible suggestions:

1. Vaccine ambassadors are needed.
2. People are afraid due to lack of trust, mental illness and misinformation.
3. Staff as ambassadors have the trust of clients, understand the mental health aspect and are both cultural brokers and community peers.
4. Provide a one hour training for staff and homeless peers and give a certificate-“certified peer specialist”
5. Staff need to feel safe getting vaccines, agencies should educate staff and outline benefits-for example- *it protects yourself and those you work and live with, you won’t have to get tested numerous times and you won’t have to quarantine if exposed.*
6. Transportation in rural areas, computer inequities, hearing challenges, long waits to register and libraries being closed to computer access are all challenges people face.
7. Pre-work is important to gain trust, one example; *take selfies getting vaccinated*
8. A clear centralized path for answers is vital for the entire state, now individual shelters are piecing together answers in their areas which lends to frustration and conflicting procedures.

Leanna and Krystal will continue to reach out to learn what requires modification. They both are available to answer questions and hear suggestions through email.

**OPTIONS Program:** Sybil Mazerolle, SUD Program Manager, outlined OPTIONS (**O**verdose, **P**revention, **T**hrough, **I**ntensive, **O**utreach, **N**aloxone & **S**afety). OPTIONS is a new program out of DHHS to prevent opioid overdose that embeds a SUD Clinician within Co-Responder agencies, referred to as Community-based Recovery Support Partners. The Co-Responders, located thoughout the state, are Community low-barrier access points (Syringe Service Programs, Recovery Centers & Clubhouses) and provides both education and connection to local Harm Reduction services. The program also maintains ODMAP (Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program) which maps in real time any spike and overdose alerts throughout the state. The presentation was posted on the Maine Homeless Planning Website and mailed to the contacts on the SHC mailing list.

**CSH Update:** The 60 minute CSH update started with a recap of the 5 information gathering sessions held to learn the challenges facing those who are unsheltered and other stakeholders, with two more sessions scheduled in March and April. The three themes surfacing from the sessions expressed the following needs;

Accessing the System- Improved access though use of technology, a common housing application, universal policies/procedures and greater transparency in prioritization of beds and/or resources, additional mobile crisis units and outreach efforts to unsheltered people and better discharge planning from medical institutions, particularly for those with disabilities.

Service Hub Design- Better communication and coordination between providers, deeper navigator /support specialist, representation of people with lived expertise in the Hubs, on the CoC Board and SHC.

Services Improvement-Increased landlord engagement and community education to end stigma around homelessness and vouchers, better use of data to track outcomes and progress and professionalization of shelter staff and training in trauma-informed care and other best practices.

The bulk of the update defined the 9 Service Hubs, their roles and a collaborative brainstorming conversation to list community partnerships and assign lead contacts. The following chart displays the outcome, listing community partnerships and a lead contact person. The Contacts here are for preliminary planning purposes and are not necessarily going to be the Lead agency in each HUB. Similarly, the Partnership agencies here are just a starting point and will be expanded on over time.

**Hub 1: York**

Contact: Wes Phinney

Community Partnerships: Stakeholders Group, Bridges of Hope, Caring Unlimited, York County Shelter, CAP Agency, FQHC and Justice.

**Hub 2: Cumberland**

Contact: Cullen Ryan

Community Partnerships: LTS and its 16 area partner organizations

**Hub 3:** **Mid Coast**

Contact: Steph Prim, Donna Kelley, Rota Knott

Community Partnerships: Southern Mid-coast Housing, Ecumenical Council for Homeless Prevention, Waldo County Homeless Coalition, Community Services Group (Waldo), Gathering Place, Healthcare, Community Resource Council (Lincoln), Waldo Community Action Partners, Greater Bay Area Ministerium - GBAM

**Hub 4: Androscoggin**

Contact: Shawn Yardley

Community Partnerships: Lewiston/Auburn Alliance for Services for the Homeless, New Beginnings, Municipal Leaders, Community Concepts, Safe Voices, Trinity Jubilee, Tri-County Mental Health and Common Ties

**Hub 5:** Western

Contact: Bill Crandell

Community Partnerships: CCI, Western Maine Community Action, FAME. Rumford Group Homes, Safe Voices, Common Ties, New Beginnings

**Hub 6: Central**

Contact: Katie Spencer-White and Tracey Allan Community Partnerships: Affordable Housing Taskforce, GA, Justice, Churches, Municipal Leaders, Starfish Ministry and Bread of Life

**Hub 7: Penquis**

Contact: Josh ‘Alessio

Community Partnerships: Bangor Region Housing Response, LTS, Community Health Leadership Board, CHCS Acadia Huddle and Shaw House

**Hub 8: Down East**

Contact: Tracey Hair

Community Partnerships: CHCS, Downeast Community Partners, Health Acadia, Hancock County Jail Volunteers, Next Step Domestic Violence, Families First Community Center, Community Compass, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Healthy Peninsula, and Faith groups.

**Hub 9: Aroostook**

Contact: Heidi R.

Community Partnerships: Homeless Stakeholders Group, Community Action Agency, Social workers, Justice, Legal Assistance, shelter and housing providers

An additional session with CSH will be held in early March to learn about Service Hub implementation in CT and Alaska and to begin a discussion on how people will access the system. The CSH presentation will be posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website and sent to contacts on the SHC mailing list.

**Council Updates:**

* **Regional Updates Region I-**Cheryl mentioned HVJ is preparing to give testimonies to the Legislature. The numbers of homeless continues to increase in Cumberland County. Jenny stated the nomination of members have been voted upon and submitted. **Region II-**Hasn’t meet since the January’s SHC meeting, therefore no updates recorded. **Region III-**Josh reported the voting process for members was solidified and voteswere cast and tallied. The results will be forwarded to MaineHousing.
* **Legislative Updates:** Cullen gave a synopsis of this month’s Legislative packet. **Federal-**On 1/20/21 President Biden signed an Executive Order extending the CDC’s eviction moratorium through March 2021. It applies to tenants facing eviction for nonpayment of rent who present a signed declaration to their landlords that they meet certain income and hardship criteria. Also, on 1/21, President Biden signed an Executive Order to enable states and communities to address the urgent health and housing needs of people experiencing homelessness by directing the FEMA to fully cover (100%) the costs to move people experiencing homelessness and living in congregate shelters or encampments to safer living spaces in hotels through the end of September 2021. Cullen made note that $5 billion in emergency assistance to help secure housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness is part of President Joe Biden’s $1.9 trillion COVID-19 and economic recovery plan.

**State-**There are several bills presented before the legislature addressing homelessness, housing, rental assistance, general assistance and food insecurity. Cullen brought to the attention of the council LD 81 an Act to Ensure the Safety of Children Experiencing Homelessness by Extending Shelter Placement Periods. This bill amends the definition of "emergency children's shelter" to extend placement from 30 to 60 days and it amends the definition of "shelter for homeless children" to extend the limit on overnight lodging and supervision from 30 consecutive overnights to 60 consecutive overnights.

* **MSHA:** Lauren explained Rent Relief will cover up to three months of rental payments. There will be additional restrictions and documents required. When the federal government provides guidance, updates of the program will be made public, hopefully by March 1, 2021. RFP Applications for YHDP will be posted on The MaineHousing website next week.

**Stephanie adjourned the meeting with an invitation to the next SHC Meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021.**