



MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL

December 8, 2020

Minutes

9:30-12:30

Virtual Location: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/352415877>

and/or call 1(646)749-3122, Passcode 352-415-877

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

Guests: Betty LaBua (MaineHousing), Tracy Allen (KBH), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), , Melanie Buber (HSA), Laurie Murray (MaineHousing), Kate Easter (MCEDV), Rota Knott (Tedford), Kelsey Brown (HUD), Jamie Blackburn (CSH), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Jenny Stasio, (TTD), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Anna Smith (CSH), Sarah Gallagher (CSH), Joe Locke (MaineHousing), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Sara Wade (SAMHS, DHHS), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Anna Brewer (HVJ), Christina Dingus (MaineHousing), Erin Kelly (Preble Street), Joan Bautista (Preble Street), Shawn Yardley (Community Concepts), Joe McNally (Milestone), Katie Spencer-White (MMHS), Megan Gean-Gendron (YCSPI), Mike Shaughnessy (MaineHousing), Megan Connoly, Melissa McEntee (RGH), Meredith Pesce (Amistad), Peter Merrill (Maine Housing), Anne Pringle (Friends of Deer Oaks), Orinder Fogler, Elise Johansen (Safe Voices), Lisa Letourneau (CDC), Lincoln Jeffers (City of Lewiston), Norm Maze (Shalom House), Boyd Kronholm,(BAHS), Beverly Ebersold (USICH), Heidi Rackliffe (ACAP), Bob Wright (Panta Rei), Amy Sneirson (MHRC), Chris Rector, Kenneth Capron (Memory Works) and Sarah Michniewicz (BNA).

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

Welcome: Stephanie opened the last meeting of 2020 by thanking everyone for contributing their support, wisdom and talent during a difficult year. Stephanie welcomed and introduced Bob Wright and Beverly Ebersold.

CSH Update: Sarah Gallagher started the 2 hour CSH Update by affirming the process is, even with the COVID created restraints, headed in the right direction. The presentation began by revisiting the project's purpose of strengthening and redesigning the homeless delivery system and by reaffirming these key deliverables:

- Interactive Resource Mapping
What resources are needed throughout Maine?
- Regional Systems Design
Alignment with CE
How do localities organize to best support people experiencing homelessness?
Accountability through SHC

- Plan for Affordable and Supportive Housing Development
200 units of Affordable Housing and 40 units of Supportive Housing

The following themes to be addressed in order to create systems equity were discussed:

- Theme 1: Equity in Receiving Services-Geographic, Racial and Gender Equity
- Theme 2: Engagement of Main Stream Services: Healthcare, GA and DOJ.
- Theme 3: Distribution of Resources: How are they being allocated?
- Theme 4: Access Issues: How can they best be attained at time and need?

A conversation of the similarities and differences of the problems identified within the focus groups highlighted these concerns:

- Shelter Work Groups: Persistent inequality and discrimination, limited shelter access, affordable and supportive housing; underfunded mental health, substance use and prevention services create overreliance on the shelter system. There is a need to engage mainstream systems such as General Assistance, Justice and Healthcare in equitable prevention, diversion and discharge planning.
- Leadership Teams: Unequal access due to resources and capacity, lack of single point of entry causes overreliance on shelter system and a need for engagement of mainstream systems in prevention and diversion opportunities.
- People with Lived Experience: Homelessness is not a choice, but rather the result of a system that has failed vulnerable people. People experiencing homelessness in Maine face discrimination in shelter, barriers to housing and necessary resources such as mental health, substance use and general assistance. Prevention resources are non-existent, and leaders do not understand the actual needs of people facing homelessness. All providers should have a common housing application, universal policies/procedures and greater transparency in prioritization of beds and/or resources. Better communication and coordination between providers. More mobile crisis units and outreach efforts to unsheltered people. Better discharge planning from medical institutions, particularly for those with disabilities. Professionalization of shelter staff and common training in trauma-informed care and other best practices. Better use of data and tools to support clients. More representation of lived expertise on the CoC Board and SHC.

Jamie Blackburn applied system resource mapping to show only 2 counties in Maine, based on current HMIS data, meet HUD's System Performance Measure Goal of staying less than 30 days in a shelter. The National Average of people with successful exits to permanent destinations from shelter is 42% and the Northeast average is 46%.

The CSH update concluded with the question, "How many HUBS are necessary to create a stronger and higher performing system?" Heidi and Melanie from ACAP spoke on how they worked collaboratively with 30 different entities to problem solve their areas need for a low barrier shelter. Council agreed this form of problem solving expresses the need for the each HUB to share community resources. How to localize and share resources are key factors when determining where shelters should be located and the localities of HUBs Whether there should be eight or nine will be voted on at next SHC meeting.

SHC Appointment Process: Peter Merrill clarified the recent changes in the nominating process have come from the Governor's office. SHC Members are political appointments approved by the legislature and Governor's office. The Governor has asked for a minimum of two submissions for each seat. If a region is unable to submit two candidates they should show a good faith effort has been made. Peter will pass on any further clarifying information to Scott and the Regional Chairs.

CDC Update: Dr. Lisa Letourneau joined the meeting with the announcement vaccines are on the horizon. Shelter staff are frontline workers and will be able to be vaccinated in phase 2 or 3 of the first tier of distribution. Lisa asked for providers to strategize on how staff will be vaccinated. She recommended connecting with district PH nurses and watching zoom sessions for further specifics on vaccine distribution. The zoom schedule will be posted on the CDC update. She added there continues to be a spike in COVID positive cases throughout the state of Maine. The rise in cases are attributed to Thanksgiving travel and an increase in the availability in testing. Since the CDC cannot routinely notify all people testing positive, she asked for providers to remind those who have been tested to obtain their results.

Council Updates:

- **Approval of Minutes-** Cullen motioned for November's minutes to be approved. Cheryl seconded. November's minutes were approved.
- **Regional Updates-**
Region I met in November. Access to COVID testing and the increased in numbers of people languishing in shelters due to the pandemic continue to be problematic. Regions II and III did not meet.
- **Legislative Updates-** At this point in time, no SHC action is warranted regarding State and Federal Legislation, however Cullen reminded providers should reach out and introduce themselves to the new state legislatures. At the Federal level, the status of the 4th stimulus package remains stalled in Congress.

**Next Meeting:
Tuesday, January 12, 2021**