

# **HAMPDEN COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE**

## **Board of Directors**

Mental Health Association  
995 Worthington St., Springfield, MA

May 15, 2015, 9:15 am – 10:45 am

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Marianne Polmetier (RVCC), Dawn DiStefano (YWCA), Karen Dean (Hampden County Sheriff's Dept.), Lauren Voyer (HAP Housing), Doreen Fadus (Mercy Hospital), Jerry Ray (MHA), Maria Perez (NNCC), Lizzy Ortiz (City of Springfield), Charlie Knight (post consumer), Paul Bailey (Springfield Partners for Community Action), Pamela Jumba (MLKFS), Pamela Schwartz (Network), Ann Lentini (Domus), Bill Miller (FOH), Alicia Zoeller (City of Holyoke), Steve Huntley (VOC, John Roberson (CHD), Kathryn Buckley-Brawner (Catholic Charities).

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Gerry McCafferty welcomed Board members and members introduced themselves to the group.

#### **1. Review of Minutes**

The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the January 22, 2015 meeting.

#### **2. Report on the 2015 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count**

Gerry provided a handout (attached) summarizing the results of the 2015 point-in-time count, which took place January 29, 2015.

The report notes that the count identified 3002 homeless persons this year. Of this number, 0.4% were living outside, 93.2% were staying in emergency shelter, and 6.5% were in transitional housing or safe havens. The number of homeless persons increased by 12% over last year, an increase that was driven by a 19% increase in the number of homeless people in families with children.

The numbers included 69 chronically homeless individuals. In response to a question, Gerry clarified that this number includes both men and women.

The number include 756 families with children who are in some form of emergency shelter. It was clarified that 250-300 of those families are in motels, and the rest in emergency shelter placements operated by Hampden County providers. It was noted that the successful diversion pilot in Hampden County is diverting 60% of family households who apply for shelter—meaning that these families are provided assistance which prevents them from becoming literally

homeless and needing an emergency shelter placement. Providers also noted that the state has projected that there will be about 100 families in motels at the end of the fiscal year (June 30).

The group discussed the high percentage of Hampden County homeless persons who are Hispanic – 58%—and the fact that some of these persons do not speak English or may not speak English well. The group discussed the importance of bilingual staff and written materials at all programs serving people who are homeless.

There was a question about the Homeless/At-Risk Youth Count that took place at the same time as the point-in-time count. Data from this count is still being compiled by the state and will be released when it is available.

### **3. Report on Zero 2016**

Gerry gave an update on the Zero 2016 campaign.

The national campaign used our point-in-time and other data to help us establish take-down targets for each population—that, is, the numbers of people we must house monthly in each population in order to get to functional zero. The target numbers include persons homeless at the time of the point-in-time count, plus the number expected to become homeless (veterans) or become chronically homeless during the course of the campaign.

Based on analysis of our data, we have set goals of housing 9 veterans and 4 chronically homeless persons each month. The campaign has provided dashboards—attached—which summarize our progress.

For each month from January through April, we did not meet our target for housing veterans. In order to house all homeless veterans by the end of 2015, we need to work collectively to house more people each month. For veterans, there are significant resources available and unfilled, including housing vouchers and rapid rehousing assistance, so this is a matter of connecting existing homeless veterans with existing housing resources. Entities working with the veterans committee are trying very hard to do that, and will increase efforts in the coming months.

For chronically homeless individuals, we did not meet goals in January and February, but exceeded goals in March and April, and are also well-positioned to keep housing chronically homeless individuals because of new housing resources becoming available later this year. Projections indicate that we should be able to house all chronically homeless individuals in Hampden County by June 2016. Following that, we would expect to be at “functional zero”, which means that we should be able to house any chronically homeless person we identify within 30 days. At this point, we can begin using permanent supportive housing units to house vulnerable homeless individuals who do not meet the definition of chronic—which means getting vulnerable people off the streets/out of shelter and into housing more quickly.

### **4. Gaps Analysis and Prioritization for Next Funding Round**

Part of the CoC’s work (per HUD’s mandate) is to take information from the annual point-in-time count and the annual homeless shelter/housing inventory and undertake a gaps analysis to guide the CoC in determining what new projects to fund in the next CoC funding round.

Gerry distributed a summary of the Hampden County 2015 gaps analysis, which is calculated by a formula provided by HUD. A copy of the analysis is attached.

The analysis shows that the largest gaps are in the family system, with a need for more permanent supportive housing and more rapid rehousing for homeless families. While there continues to be a need for permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing for individuals, the gap is not nearly as large as it is for families.

There was some discussion as to whether the CoC should invest new money in the family shelter system, because of the way that a centralized state system means that our CoC cannot ever make a dent in the problem. The sense is that, for every family we house, the state will just place another one. We do not have the resources to solve the statewide problem.

There was also discussion as to whether rapid rehousing is an effective strategy. It was noted that data shows that, among families provided rapid rehousing assistance, fewer than 10% return to homelessness within two years.

The board approved use of the numbers generated by the HUD analysis to be used in the annual HUD-required submission (due to be submitted later in the day on 5/15/2015), but that the CoC should continue to discuss competing priorities and also take into account activities the state decides to fund.

#### **5. Policies and Procedures for System Coordination, Eligibility Standards, and Coordinated Entry**

Gerry presented draft CoC System Coordination, Standards for Assistance, and Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures, which are based on numerous meetings of a work group on coordinated entry. The policies and procedures are attached. Following conversation, the Board unanimously agreed to adopt the policies and procedures on an interim basis—that is, to be used for guidance as they continue to be evaluated. The “interim basis” reflects the fact that the Board wants to revisit the policies and procedures in future meetings as the CoC moves to implementation of coordinated entry. The Board indicated that the policies and procedures become effective June 1, 2015.

The meeting adjourned.