

Hampden County Individual Services Meeting Minutes - 11/17/20

In attendance: Grechar Aquino, FOH/CSO, Ric Avila, Eliot CHS-Homeless Services, Dallas Clark, Western MA Helpline, Linda Cruz, River Valley Counseling Center, Mia Dixon, FOH/CSO, Barb Gallo, WMRWC, Jen Glover, Life Path, Hwei-Ling Greeney, Amherst Community Connections, Mark Jachym, FOH/CSO, Nichole King, FOH/CSO, Jay Levy, Eliot CHS-Homeless Services, Jenifer Lucca, Samaratin Inn, Kathy McBride, WMRWC, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield/Hampden CoC, Bill Miller, FOH/CSO, Gabriel Quaglia, Tapestry, Christina Ruest, FOH/CSO, Sylvia Ruiz, Fallon Health NaviCare, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Delphine Wray, FOH/CSO, Chris Zabik, DMH

Shelter Updates:

Friends of the Homeless is bringing on additional shelter capacity for men and women - should open next week. The number of calls and walk-ins is high. FOH is also working with the City of Holyoke to expand shelter there but that is moving more slowly.

Catholic Charities is using 4 hotels in the Springfield area to shelter roughly 100 people living on the street. There was an initial surge but that is now leveling off.

Samaratin Inn: 16 beds filled - capacity for 30. Closed referral system from treatment centers.

Isolation and Quarantine Issue:

Right now there is no state provision for quarantine (unless tested and awaiting a test, then the Everett hotel is available). Only isolation hotel is in Everett. Transportation provided by Sheriff's dept. but not available after 5 pm - shelters then need to establish quarantine on site which can be complicated. Concern expressed about putting folks in same site for isolation and quarantine for risk of those in quarantine getting infected and bringing the infection back to the shelter/community. Noted that there is not regular testing at FOH because it would be unclear what to do re: quarantine if someone tested positive. So now checking for symptoms and if someone tests positive then testing those in close contact. The system is not set up to do quarantine for many people at once. Tents in Springfield last Spring did not really work - not weather proof. Taken down.

Pamela shared that mayors from across Western MA are meeting with the COVID-19 Command Center this Friday to discuss the need for I&Q in Western MA. Will report back.

HUD Point in Time Count: HUD asked for input re: doing the PIT count as usual on the last Wed. in January. Re: PIT for unsheltered population, instinct is to do a more abbreviated survey. Will talk more.

Mercy Medical has hired two new outreach staff to support street outreach.

Built for Zero is doing meetings on case conferencing to support one-on-one problem-solving instead of "updates." Will bring tips to Hampden's case conferencing meetings.

FY21 Budget: Senate is debating its budget this week; the Network is continuing to advocate for its priorities of housing stability and RAFT improvements to make the prevention resource more accessible. Be sure to join the Network blog at <http://westernmasshousingfirst.org> to stay in the loop of action alerts and outcomes.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1 pm - 2 pm