

### **Three County Individual Services Meeting Minutes -February 13, 2023**

In Attendance: *Farida Bature, WMNEH, Keleigh Benezra, CSO/FOH, Keith Benoit, City of Northampton, Shaundell Diaz, Three County COC, Erin Forbush, Rick Hart, FOH/Hampshire county, Laura Hudson, Andy Klatka, Elliot services, Michele Lafleur, Three County COC/CAPV, Jay Levy, Elliot Community Human Services, Hwei-Ling Greeney, Amherst Community Connections, Tim McCarthy, Craig's Doors, Debra McLaughlin, Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region, Gilad Meron, CAPV, Theresa Nicholson, CHD, Lizzy Ortiz, Community care cooperative, ACO, Liz Plouffe, City of Easthampton, Dan Santong, DMH, Andrea Schmid, Rua'a Wahhas, Amherst Community connections, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Chris Zabik, DMH*

### **Shelter Updates**

**Amherst (Craig's Doors):** At full capacity. During the cold snap the town allowed for an expansion of 5 beds. Kicking off the PVTa bus pass program to provide all shelter guests with daily passes for the next 5 months. There will be some surpluses if any agency is interested.

**Greenfield (Service Net):** At full capacity with 30 beds. During cold snap, 6 additional individuals received shelter.

**Northampton (Service Net):** Slight decrease in demand. Averaging a total of 32-35 individuals nightly.

**Pittsfield (Service Net):** Seeing unprecedented demand (one night with 67 individuals in shelter). The current nightly average is between 50-55 beds.

**CSO/ServiceNet Shelter transition for Northampton/Greenfield:** Great collaboration between ServiceNet and CSO. CSO is hiring for many positions.

<https://csoemployment.e3applicants.com/careers>

**Holyoke (CHD):** 48 bed shelter is effectively always full (if an opening, it fills immediately). The 46-unit low-threshold housing development should open by the end of February.

**Safe Havens, Greenfield:** at full capacity but hoping to have some successful discharges in the coming months.

**Elliot CHS update:** In addition to guiding people to pop-up and other shelters during the extreme cold, they utilized some of their own funds to place others in motels. Noted the great collaboration among providers

**Community Foundation of Western MA Funds:** \$50,000 grant to provide overflow emergency shelter spent down – the cold snap depleted the funds quickly. Roughly 92 individuals were placed in motel shelter, working with Red Roof Inn (S. Deerfield), Days Inn (Greenfield), Motel 6 (West Springfield), Knights Inn (Hadley). A total of 330 bed nights. 24 individuals moved from

the hotel to permanent placement. Big shout-out to Theresa Nicholson for her leadership in this effort and to Tim McCarthy for his support. Channel 22 covered CFWM's funding [HERE](#).

Franklin County resource: Deb McLaughlin noted that partners in Franklin County have been allocated \$60,000 to support mobile outreach which could include winter supplies and other relevant support for people experiencing homelessness. Deb will obtain additional information about accessing these supplies and share via Pamela.

**Low-threshold housing to be discussed:** The group agreed it would be useful to devote 30 minutes of our next meeting to the topic of low-threshold housing, e.g., where it is located, how many units, what is criteria for access, what is the path to access. This will be an information sharing opportunity for providers. Pamela will follow-up with outreach to low-threshold housing providers and plan for this at the 3/13 meeting.

**Network Legislative meetings coming up:** FYI, the Network is hosting meetings with the Western MA delegation on 2/27 (Hampden County 9:30-10:30am; Franklin Counties 11:00am – 12noon; Berkshire County 12:45-1:45pm) The Network will be presenting budget and legislative priorities. This will be a great opportunity to demonstrate partnership among city/ towns and providers. See [HERE](#) for legislative priorities. More to come on advocacy follow-up!

**Western Mass Housing Coalition:** This group, convened by Way Finders, had its first legislative briefing last week with a dozen legislators and staff from across the region and 40 other partners. The Coalition's primary goal is to increase housing production in the region. The Network and the Coalition are working in close collaboration.

Network Annual Event: Make sure your calendar is marked for the **Network's Annual Gathering on Friday, May 12, 10 am - 11:30 am at Holyoke Community College**. See here for the [save the date flyer](#).

**Other announcements:**

- The MATCH program: Go [HERE](#) to learn more about move-in costs (first, last, security deposit, furniture, etc.) for individuals who are moving from homelessness (or an institution). Available through MassHealth members until 2025.
- Behavioral Health Helpline: A new behavioral health helpline funded by the state through DMH has been launched. Click [BHHL](#) to learn more.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday March 13, 2023, 2-3 pm**