

### **Three County Individual Services Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2023**

*In Attendance: Farida Bature, WMNEH, Keith Benoit, City of Northampton, Elysse Cooper, CSO, Katie Dwan, Three County COC, Erin Forbush, Service Net, Jen Glover, Life Path, Elder Protective Services, Rick Hart, FOH/Hampshire county, Laura Hudson, Miah Karass, Amherst Community Connections, Andy Klatka, Elliot CHS, Paige Lemelin, CSO, Jay Levy, Elliot Community Human Services, Tim McCarthy, Craig's Doors, Debra McLaughlin, Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region, Bryant McMillian, CSO, Gilad Meron, CAPV, Anna Mitkevicius, CSO, Lizzy Ortiz, Community care cooperative, ACO, Christine Palmieri, MHA Dan Santong, DMH, Sam Shanky, Craigs Doors, Housing Navigator, Rua'a Wahhas, Amherst Community connections, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Jessica Sastre, CHD*

Welcome Katie Dwan as program director for the Three County COC!

#### **Shelter Updates**

**Amherst ( Craig's Doors):** They have expanded capacity in their congregate shelter for the next few days. The PVTA program kicked off March 1. All their guests have access to the PVTA line for the next 11 weeks and anyone in the area who needs a free pass can pick up some at the Amherst Survival Center.

**Greenfield (Service Net):** Continues to be at full capacity at 30 beds. They expand as needed in extreme weather.

**Northampton (Service Net):** At capacity. More demand lately.

**Pittsfield (Service Net):** Also at capacity.

**Northampton Permanent Supportive Housing (5 Franklin Street) is OPEN!** Several individuals have moved in so far. All 16 units will be filled with individuals who have lived rough for a very long time and suffer multiple disabilities. VERY exciting progress. Congratulations and much gratitude to all involved!

#### **Low Threshold Housing (LTH) Discussion**

Thanks to our partners at Clinical & Support Options (CSO), Mental Health Association (MHA) and Amherst Community Connections (ACC) for providing this overview of the program in general and their program in particular.

Note: After the presentations (summarized below), we agreed that Pamela would reach out to the LTH partners and DPH to organize a meeting to gain greater clarity on DPH's guidelines for program eligibility and answer other questions before bringing synthesized information back to the group.

#### **Clinical and Support Options (CSO) Program**

Requires that individuals are experiencing homelessness as defined by:

1. living in a place not meant for human habitation

2. chronically living in an emergency shelter

Eligibility Criteria (per DPH):Experiencing

1. Substance use disorder or at-risk of overdoses
2. Someone at risk of acquiring HIV or living with HIV
3. Someone at risk of sexual exploitation

Referral Process:

Email ([lthsreferrals@csinc.org](mailto:lthsreferrals@csinc.org))

There is currently a wait list; individuals will continue to be assessed and added to the wait list..

Currently the program houses 115 individuals across Springfield (50), Northampton (32) and Greenfield (33) . They are organized by “teams” for each area in order to allow for more focused attention on the individuals served.

**Mental Health Association (MHA):** Thanks to MHA for their detailed summary [HERE](#) of their low-threshold housing resources (DPH, HUD and BSAS funded), which includes program type, # of units and eligibility criteria. Be sure to check it out!

**Amherst Community Connections:**

Currently funded by DPH for 15 scattered site one-bedroom units in Amherst. Referrals to the program should go to Rua’a Wahhas at [RuaaWahhasACC@gmail.com](mailto:RuaaWahhasACC@gmail.com).

ACC criteria:

1. chronically Homeless for at least one year (or within the last 3 years homeless for a duration of one year)
2. substance use disorder

All units are currently occupied and there are 15 individuals on waitlist. Currently focusing on individuals that may have been sexually exploited, trafficked, or who are doing survival sex work.

Case management includes weekly meetings (but clarified they are not required to They meet with individuals once a week to keep up with paperwork, go to their housing to make sure they are safe in their units. Outreach to ensure they can voice out their concerns.

**Center for Human Development (CHD):** 46 LTH units in Holyoke. Very close to opening. For email referrals, contact [dmdiaz@chd.org](mailto:dmdiaz@chd.org).

**Update on Reimagining Shelter Project:** Shaundell Diaz(3 county COC) is a leader in this national effort and is bringing it to the 3 county region, fundamentally informed by people with lived experience. Meetings are happening monthly on Fridays. Reach out to Pamela (or Shaundell!) if you want to be connected.

**Legislative and FY24 budget updates:** The Network convened 3 meetings on 2/27/23 (Hampden, Hampshire/Franklin, Berkshire) on a county basis with legislators and Network partners to share our priorities. Go [HERE](#) to see the powerpoint presentations for each county.

Gov. Healey released her proposed FY24 budget. Unfortunately, it substantially cuts the RAFT benefit from \$10,000/year to \$7,000 over 24 months. It also cuts the Home and Healthy for Good (PSH) line-item. Pamela is working on finalizing the Network budget priorities with the Steering Committee input and will release them shortly.

**Network Annual Gathering:** Reminder on the Network's annual gathering on Friday, May 12, 10:30am-12:00pm, at HCC Kittredge Center. The invitation is coming soon; meanwhile make sure your calendar is marked!

Announcements:

- **New housing lottery Amherst East Gables in June** [HERE](#)
- Neighbor to Neighbor is having a **Know your Right Workshop** for tenants in Springfield. Go [HERE](#)
- See useful articles – Atlantic Magazine “Looming revolt against Homelessness” and Governor’s Housing Work Group report [HERE](#)

**Next meeting date: April 10 at 2pm**