

Hampden County Individual Services Committee Meeting Minutes - 3/16/21

In attendance: Grechar Aquino, CSO/FOH, Farida Bature, Mercy Medical Center, Lisa Connolly, CHD, Lynn Conway, Eliot Services, Linda Cruz, River Valley Counseling Center, Sally English, Viability, Janice Humason, CSO/FOH, Mark Jachym, CSO/FOH, Nichole King, CSO/FOH, Jay Levy, Eliot Services, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield/Hampden CoC, Bill Miller, CSO/FOH, Lizzy Ortiz, Springfield CoC Youth program, Kim Puffer, Domus, Herschelle Reaves, BHN, Keith Rhone, CSO/FOH, Denise Rivera-Nunez, CSO/FOH, Jarely Sanchez, River Valley Counseling Center, Rosemary Surdyka, Mercy Medical, Stephanie Tonelli, Springfield Police Department, Lauren Washburn, Catholic Charities, Kathy West, Eliot Services, Chris Zabik, DMH

HMIS Capacity Building - As part of funding the HUD CoC received 2 years ago to improve its Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the CoC will be issuing a survey to those who use HMIS to collect feedback and information. The CoC may be shifting its HMIS provider to a new and better system. But first, please stay tuned for this survey.

Trauma Informed Care Training - [Register HERE](#). This 3-part training is being led by Ayala Livny, a skilled and experienced trainer. It also ultimately connects to the pursuit of quality data because trauma informed relationships between providers and clients is an underpinning to meaningful information sharing - which in turn informs our data. It also provides a session on vicarious trauma, that is, how providers can care for themselves through experiencing the trauma of others.

Shelter/hotel update:

Friends of the Homeless and Catholic Charities' and CHD hotels together are meeting capacity needs. Positive infection rates are extremely low to non-existent and people are getting vaccines - it is hoped that the one dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine will soon be available for shelter guests. Focus for hotel stayers is on re-housing.

FY22 Budget and Legislative Priorities: Pamela shared the Network's [FY22 budget priorities](#) and [legislative priorities](#). Many Network partners met with Western MA legislators by county over the past 10 days. We will continue to communicate with our legislators regarding these priorities. Please be sure to be signed up for the Network blog so you can stay connected to the budget and legislative process and bring your voice to it! [Sign up here](#).

Discussion Question: What is the best use of the new federal funds?

The remainder of the meeting was a conversation on this question of how best to allocate federal funds that are coming soon. The discussion is summarized in cursory form through the bullet points below:

- ensure the continuing use of hotels - this model has really worked for stabilizing and assisting clients with housing - the combination of 24/7 staffing; meals served on site; a centralized area, all combine to allow for greater contact with guests, greater relationship building, and as a result greater support towards housing

- for individuals who have behavioral problems and are not allowed to stay in shelter or hotels, what about them? (a provider is aware of this happening to 3-4 people)
- this goes to the mental health needs of the population being served; a highest priority is to increase access to mental health support
- Discussion of CSPECH funding as a resource (using Medicaid dollars to provide support services to people receiving housing). It takes roughly 12-14 clients to fund a full-time staff position. Does it make sense to assess hotel guests to determine who is CSPECH eligible? Then partner with Housing Authorities for vouchers.
- Consider using new money to hire mental health staff for PATH or CSO - having a prescriber on staff is critical

This conversation will continue in the meetings ahead.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, 4/20, 1 pm