

**Minutes**  
**Vermont Council on Homelessness**

**August 28th, 2014**

2:00 – 4:00

Pavilion 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conf. Room  
State Street, Montpelier

Present: *Jack Kearnan (VIA), Calvin Smith (VCRHYP), Tyler Sweeten (VCIL), Paul Dragon (OEO/DCF), Lily Sojourner (AHS), Amy Perez (Cathedral Square), Daniel Blankenship (VSHA), Margaret Bozik (CHT), Auburn Watersong (VT Network), Michelle Fay (Umbrella), Paul Dupre (DMH), Liz Whitmore (DOC), Deborah Hall (HPC), Amanda Churchill (YDP), Monica Hutt (AHS), Angus Chaney (AHS), Jen Hollar (DHCD), Harry Chen (AHS), Renee Sarao, (VAHC and VCEH), Erhard Mahnke (VAHC), Linda Ryan (Samaritan House), Maura Collins (VHFA)*

Angus called the meeting to order at 2:05.

Michelle Fay assisted with minutes. (*Thanks, Michelle!*)

**Introductions and Announcements**

Paul announced an upcoming meeting at the statehouse focusing on child savings accounts (October 27<sup>th</sup>); and VIT meetings relating to DCF and AHS (August 28<sup>th</sup> and September 5<sup>th</sup>).

**Public Comment:** No one offered public comment.

**Continuation of Key AHS Housing Measures Discussion**

Angus explained the purpose of the measures is to standardize outcomes for housing service providers, many of whom are engaged in outcome measurement that isn't necessarily comparable across the state. One member expressed appreciation that the affordable housing measure includes maintaining housing out to 24 months. No further comments.

**Family Supportive Housing Update**

Paul distributed draft handouts of the Year 1 evaluation document and info about Family Savings Accounts. Caseloads are 12-15 families instead of 40-50 with other programs. Areas of improvement from evaluation: haven't enrolled the target # of families and of those enrolled only 3/4 are housed. The barrier is primarily the lack of availability of affordable units. The group briefly discussed the merits and drawbacks of master leases - can help with affordability, but run counter to the Housing First principle of housing choice. Contact Paul if you have questions about the first year evaluation. Paul will make the report available after it is finalized.

## **Voluntary Services**

At the last meeting people expressed some concern with the word change in the strategic plan from "voluntary" to "individual" services.

- Issue how the word choice impacts the meaning of the bullets that follow it in the document.
- DV survivors - empowerment model means services cannot be mandated; participant drives agenda. Office of Violence Against Women (federal) prohibits any kind of required services in exchange for housing.
- Does this approach work with other populations?
- DV network still uses eligibility as a gateway, but once in, services are optional.
- Suggestion of building case management capacity in as a grant line item.
- Transitional Living Program does have work and education requirements.
- Corrections' services around transitional housing are not voluntary.
- Does making services optional with Shelter + Care affect match requirement? – Not really.
- Maura and Daniel shared that HUD is also moving in that direction.
- Linda feels providers shouldn't worry about it too much as clients seem to engage willingly in services and aren't as hung up about whether or not they are mandated.
- Services should be offered in the setting most convenient for the client. Service providers need to be persistent.
- Approach should be trauma informed
- Where do we go from here? Angus suggests a white paper on how to provide effective housing services. Find a balance that addresses policy-makers' concerns about people looking for a "free ride." Is there a group interested in working on this and reporting out at the next meeting?

## **Medicaid Supportive Housing**

Medicaid Supportive Housing - how can we make the case with CMS that housing is a fundamental component of health and wellness? Monica and Angus are working with a small group of AHS folks (including DVHA) to design a pilot/study - seeking funding to make it happen. Jack (interfaith council) mentioned the SASH model. Monica points out that the approach they are exploring is not entirely consistent with Housing First principles in that they're trying to get housing as a component of a medical treatment plan so the Medicaid-funded housing would not stand on its own. Medicaid admin/Global commitment funds already used for case management - looking to actually use for housing costs. Need to move projects currently funded with existing Medicaid services \$ to direct billing to free some flexible funds for pilot. First need a compelling pilot plan. Identified target population, methodology for evaluation, etc. We may be able to borrow methodology info from the RTI evaluation of SASH. Other resources/models: Pathways; DOC; Housing First model. Monica feels there's a difference, in that what they want to study is the impact of housing on health care costs. Lily mentioned community health teams/Blueprint for Health as resources. Secretary Chen asked about exploring a "social impact bond." If anyone else has ideas/suggestions please email Monica or Angus. Angus asked for feedback, especially in the sections for "population," "housing" and "services."

### **Introduction from new Acting AHS Secretary, Dr. Harry Chen**

Discussion of housing as a determinant of health; Frieden Health-Impact pyramid; emphasis on the primacy of clean air, clean water and a roof over our head; issue of housing and substance abuse; importance of aligning housing efforts; idea of prescription for housing along the lines of a prescription for healthy food; hospitals are where the money is; ACOs – sharing savings.

### **VOTE on adoption of process items: Designees, Quorums, Warning Votes**

Daniel moved adoption of the document. Calvin seconded.

Discussion:

Linda expressed that the Council should meet more frequently. Members felt that frequency of meetings did not need to be included in the summary procedures document.

Maura suggested a change to the section on warning votes to allow for action when the Council may not have a full week. Members supported the change so the section read:

#### ***“Warning Votes***

*The chair will warn formal Council votes at least seven days in advance whenever possible.”*

The chair called the vote and the motion passed unanimously with the above change.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The group was out of time and this item was deferred until our next meeting.

### **Meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM**

**Next Meeting:** October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 2-4 - AHS Central Office – 208 Hurricane Lane, Williston

Respectfully submitted: Michelle Fay and Angus Chaney