

**Vermont Council on Homelessness**

**February 18, 2015**

**2:00 – 4:00**

**AHS Training Room**

**208 Hurricane Lane**

**Williston**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Angus Chaney (Agency of Human Services) Beth Meyer (Agency of Education) Polly Nichol (VT Housing & Conservation Board) Jan Demers (CVOEO) Richard Williams (VT State Housing Authority) Linda Ryan (Samaritan House, Inc.) Rita Markley (COTS) Jason W. Williams (UVM Medical Center) Deborah Hall (Homeless Prevention Center) Ken Schatz (Commissioner, DCF) Paul Dragon (OEO, DCF) Calvin Smith (VCRHYP) Jen Hollar (Department of Housing and Community Development) Maura Collins (VT Housing Finance Agency) Erhard Mahnke (VT Affordable Housing Coalition) Laurie Hurlburt (Agency of Human Services)

**Angus called the meeting to order at 2:06. A quorum was present.**

**Health Providers: Improving Multiple Patient Outcomes by Stabilizing Housing** - Jason Williams, Senior Government Relations Strategist, UVM Medical Center

**Jason Williams:** The University of Vermont Medical Center's discharge planning group is the conduit between partners and patients. While emergency vouchers are recognized as an important part of the system, they are not sustainable. UVM MC feels they are charged a higher rate for motel space than other partners. DCF has helped in negotiating for a lower rate – as much as \$20.00 less per night. UVM MC contracts for 550 bed nights per year through CHT's Harbor Place. They contributed \$25,000 towards capital costs.

The Medical Center sees approximately 25 – 45 patients a day that have no place to go to safely recuperate. Among them are drug users, patients with mental health issues, dementia, etc. Since 2013, 67 referrals were made to Harbor Place. Of those, only 10 were repeat visits. The length of stay at Harbor Place is 0 – 28 nights. The cost is \$28.00 per night. Most referrals are Medicaid clients. Health care is moving toward reimbursement based on long-term outcomes. Capitated budgets and global budgets will drive hospitals to care more about where their patients go. UVM MC is talking with the Champlain Housing Trust, AHS, Fanny Allen, the Howard Center and others on next steps to expand programming opportunities for people exiting the hospital with housing needs. This includes the need for 5-10 medical respite beds for patients who can receive home-based services.

**Jen Hollar:** What about other hospitals are in the network?

**Jason:** In 2013, the University of Vermont began engaging others through the Hospital Association, although other hospitals are not yet as engaged on this issue. Burlington's challenges seem to be somewhat unique.

**Paul Dragon:** Question on what type of data UVM MC keeping?

**Rita Markley:** How do we make Community Care homes work?

**Jason Williams:** Open to collaborative conversations. Adult Family Care homes may be a possibility.

**Linda Ryan:** We have 5-6 people in Franklin/ Grand Isle that could benefit from a Community Care Home. We are seeing people with more complex issues and complicated conditions.

**Jason Williams:** Many Vermont hospitals are participating in a Shared Savings program and others are interested in participating as well.

**Maura Collins:** What is the average length of stay for a patient?

**Jason Williams:** It's a 1 – 14 day solution. It can be a 28 day stay depending on the issue. If a patient is discharged and they come back, it means they were not properly discharged.

**Angus Chaney:** How does the new model being discussed compare with the Hope Lodge model and is that an option?

**Jason Williams:** Hope Lodge is not an option as it's for cancer patients only.

**Jen Hollar:** What about housing needs of employees? Is that another pressure?

**Jason Williams:** The University of Vermont is participating in Housing forums. There are issues for lower income employees. We are partnering with Unified Way and Bridges to help with housing.

**Angus Chaney:** Jason Williams was invited back to participate in a future meeting.

**Public Comment** No one present offered public comment

**Angus Chaney:** Recognized the impressive work of Jan Demers and CVOEO's role in getting a seasonal shelter up in Burlington this year.

**Jan Demers:** The shelter has been full to capacity every night. Most individuals are given second changes if there are issues. The clients are 80% repeat stays. People are never turned away. They have a lot of great volunteers at the Shelter. They have connected clients

with many different services during their stay at the shelter: permanent housing, employment, treatment for substance abuse.

**Ken Schatz:** General Assistance numbers are going up across all districts and it's very challenging. DCF provides the Legislature with regular updates. There is a lot of conversation going on at the Statehouse.

**Erhard Mahnke:** Motels are asking that people leave after 28 days. Then the client has to switch rooms. There needs to be a solution so that people don't have to leave after 28 days. Chris Curtis is asking if DCF can contact the Tax department for a solution. Is there a way to amend the Tax department rules – connected to the Rooms and Meals tax? Ken Schatz agreed, but said we need to proceed carefully. Perhaps a General Assistance exemption. DCF is open to further discussion to reach results.

**Linda Ryan:** We would like to move away from motels.

**Beth Meyer:** Families can only stay in a motel for three days and the motels are often far away from the children's schools and transportation is often a problem.

**Ken Schatz:** AOE should speak with the district office when this is an issue.

**Angus Chaney:** Offered to facilitate that connection between AOE and DCF.

**Erhard Mahnke:** Perhaps the family could be placed under a Cold Weather Exemption.

### **National Goal: Ending Family Homelessness**

Survey Feedback Results on the national framework – AHS/DCF received overwhelming support across the Continuum of Care for the approach to ending child and family homelessness described in the USICH Family Connection document. Among over 100 respondents, 85% support or strongly supported. 15% are neutral. 0% oppose or strongly oppose the model.

Angus presented the draft Vermont plan which had been distributed to members and requested feedback. The Vermont plan adopts the national goal, USICH strategy and adds a section to address our shortage of rental housing.

**Rita Markley:** There has been some tension around the rollout of "100,000 Homes". There is concern around the issue of scoring. Families are often not eligible because the father is working, but still the family is bouncing from shelter to shelter. What do we do about the future of homelessness?

**Linda Ryan:** Be careful not to buy into different populations. Everyone deserves a home and we should all be operating on that premise. Most of the population we serve need ongoing supports. There is concern around Rapid Re-housing. People need to be followed once they are placed. Many of them are coming off drugs and need more than one job to be able to sustain housing. People are not sustaining housing on Reach Up subsidies. Everyone should put in money for case management. We need to do this in a way that there are successful outcomes for the families.

**Jen Holler:** Provided feedback to Angus' document. Would like Section B to show more details on the housing and rehabilitation strategy, and more emphasis on working with AHS. Jen shared copies of additional written comments submitted to Angus from the housing funders.

**Maura Collins:** Suggested expanding details of the plan to include the housing components, but losing the introductory preface which articulates the problem.

**Angus Chaney:** AHS will also connect with others outside of the group. There was comment around the lack of reference to Education in the document. AHS will confer with AOE on how to add more reference to the education piece. Angus feels that the survey results give us a mandate to move ahead with Section A while the section B housing details are being finalized.

#### **Other Business:**

**Erhard Mahnke:** Is there any progress around Shelter Plus Care vouchers?

**Deborah Hall:** Exploring using federal shelter + care vouchers in collaboration with Rutland Mental Health. There is a meeting on Friday to keep the group informed.

#### **Housekeeping:**

Approval of December minutes was tabled until next meeting as the meeting was overtime. It was suggested that the next meeting be moved to either the first or last week of April to avoid school vacations.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:04 PM**