**Minutes**

**Mental Health Planning Council**

**Housing Committee**

**October 19, 2016**

**Present**

* Janet Marsden, DMH-HOT
* Chris Zabik , DMH-WM (via Telephone)
* Joe Finn, MHSA (co-chair)
* Dennis McCrory, MD, MRC
* Kim Clougherty, DMH-CO
* Adrianne Cassidy, Advocates (co-chair)
* Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH-CO
* Joel Danforth, DMH-CO
* Jeff Chasse, Vinfen
* Virginia Griffin, DMH-MB
* Mary Callanan, MAMH
* Genevieve Mulligan, MAMH
* Paul McPartland, DHCD
* Danna Mauch, MAMH (via telephone)
* David Tagliaferri, DMH-NE (via telephone)
* Gary Comeau, DMH-NE (via telephone)
* Joe Vallely, DMH-CO

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The meeting was co-chaired by Joe Finn and Adrianne Cassidy; Adrianne called the meeting to order at 10:08.

The minutes from the September 7 meeting were presented and approved upon a motion by Dennis McCrory, seconded by Jeff Chasse.

**People Are Waiting Report & Legislative Agenda**

Danna M. announced that MAMH is working to update their earlier report “People Are Waiting” and is looking to issue the new report in January. The report will point to the many places where people are waiting for services and housing such as ER, Hospitals, Detox, Continuing Care Settings; Worcester Recovery Center, Prisons & Jails.

The report will focus attention on the need to expand the DMH-Rental Subsidy Program enabling people to live in their own units in the community; as well as outline the support / case management services required to promote independence.

Danna M. will seek to engage a range of stakeholders to assemble the necessary background data to make the case for supported housing. She sees the value of incorporating successful housing models along with profiles of individuals who are living in the community into the report.

Joe F. offered his support and spoke about data from the shelter system, the Annual Point-In-Time count undertaken by each Continuum of Care (CoC) and gleaning information from the Coordinated Entry system that is now being put in place. He underscored the importance of the CoCs in helping to demonstrate the need. He also pointed to the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) as a resource. [The DMH PATH, Vinfen-Cape and HOT Teams can also document homeless needs.]

Dennis M. suggested that there be some discussion of supported housing saving costs by stabilizing individuals and avoiding costs associated with ER, hospitalization, arrests…

Joe F. mentioned MHSA’s Home& Healthy for Good housing initiative and CESPECH which is a support program for homeless individuals placed in housing. Joe highlighted research being done by Prof. Tom Bird at Boston University and noted he has data that could be of interest to the Committee.

Danna M. said she is most interested in the range of services that people feel are needed to help individuals retain their housing. She wants to report on “low-threshold” and peer models that are being utilized.

Joe F. talked about the value of relationships that are critical to establish with individuals and help to sustain them in their housing. Also, the need for flexible services under the heading of “stone soup” approach to housing.

Kim C. pointed out that DMH through it’s recent rebidding of homeless supports has in place a range of services that could help inform the types of flexible services needed including Homeless Outreach Team, ATARP & HOP Housing, and Safe Haven Programs.

Dennis M. suggested that the report include those who are living at home but, will need housing in the near term and Transitional Age Youth who present special challenges when it comes to housing.

Danna M. stated that the report is to support a long-term campaign over a number of years focused on growing housing and support services, she is acutely aware of the challenges of budget shortfalls and 9C cuts.

Adrianne C. asked that Danna send her the prior “People Are Waiting Report” and she would distribute to the Committee for reference.

**Housing Committee Letter to the Commissioner**

Joe F. shared a copy of a letter drafted by Tim O’Leary on behalf of the Housing Committee addressed to the Commissioner; Tim’s “final act” now that he is fully retired. Tim over the years was instrumental in securing several million for DMH-RSP.

Kim C. mentioned that DMH and DHCD are now meeting regularly to review DMH-RSP spending as well as identify efficiencies in processing leasing requests. She also talked about DHCD upgrading their data base and DMH looking into a web-based system.

Adrianne C. promoted incorporating the service providers into any discussion about DMH-RSP efficiencies.

Kim C. will invite Brendon Goodwin who oversees State Rental Assistance for DHCD to join the Committee and lend his expertise.

Upon review of the letter it was agreed that the recommendations were most salient and relevant to the DMH housing plan and the Committee would bring them forward to the Commissioner when they meet to discuss the housing plan.

**Educating Stakeholders**

Tied to the DMH housing plan is a specific strategy around educating and training directed at front line staff as well as other stakeholders who are critical to delivering and managing housing resources.

Dennis M mentioned the importance of educating the Legislature about the need / value of housing in the recovery process and promoting independence.

There was mention of working with CHAPA who does training and information sessions. For TAY the parents and families need housing training. Jeff C. indicated that Vinfen is doing internal training to assist staff in understanding affordable housing resources.

Adrianne C. pointed out the importance of incorporating clients/consumers in housing training. More discussion of this topic will take place at the next meeting.

**Updates**

CHAPA is holding a series of regional meetings, the Boston meeting is October 27.

**Next Meeting**: Wednesday, November 16 @10 AM, DMH Central Office