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**MAINE STATEWIDE HOMELESS COUNCIL**

**August 9, 2022**

**9:30-12:30**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:** A complete list of attendees and the agencies they represent is attached.

**Minutes:** Betty LaBua (MaineHousing) and Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing)

**Welcome:** Cullen, in the position of Co-Chair, opened today’s meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance. Tracy H. motioned to approve July’s minutes as written. Emily F. seconded. July’s minutes were unanimously approved. A moment of silence wasobserved in honor of those who have passed away while experiencing homelessness.

**System Updates:**

* **Opioid Response:** Gordon Smith, Director of Opioid Response for the State of Maine, attended today’s meeting to provide an overview on what Maine is doing to combat the opioid epidemic. The Maine Cumulative Monthly Overdose Report provides an overview of statistics regarding suspected and confirmed fatal and nonfatal drug overdoses in Maine during each month. Data collected during the first 5 months of 2022 has been complied into a report and is available on <https://mainedrugdata.org/>. This cumulative report has been provided in lieu of monthly reports for January through May of 2022, which were unable to be compiled and released due to pandemic-related delays in toxicology and substance testing. Following a death, a toxicology report is needed to confirm that a case is an overdose, what substances are involved, and to determine cause and manner of death. Going forward, the department expects to resume monthly reporting. During the first five months of 2021, the average number of overdoses per month was 658 (49 fatal and 609 nonfatal cases). During the first five months of 2022, the average number of overdoses per month was 792 (53 fatal and 739 nonfatal cases). The proportion of fatalities in January–May 2022 (266) is 9.0% higher than the first five months of 2021 (244). Gordon mentioned, data is tracked on race/ethnicity, age, military background, prior overdose history and un-domiciled/transient housing status. The report shows 41 over doses (15%) the people were reported as un-domiciled/transient housing status. Gordon will ascertain the classification for the term un-domiciled/transient housing status and report back during the next SHC meeting.
* **CDC Update:** Sharon McDonald, from the Maine CDC, attended today’s meeting to update the council on COVID. With a national average of 120,000 new cases reported daily being close to the average of cases being reported during the same time last year, the number of cases have plateaued both in Maine and the nation. However, Sharon noted, with availability of home testing it is estimated only 10% of the cases are being reported. There are some concerns on what the fall will look like in terms of COVID outbreaks related to the BA5 variant but on the other hand, vaccine’s should be available in September for anyone under the age of 50. In closing, Sharon touched on communication challenges and asked for all to spread the message of the importance of vaccinating as a means to prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and death.
* **HUB Update:** Tara started today’s update by mentioning all hubs are continuing their work toward achieving quality data. Each hub is working on outreach capacity, current outreach coverage maps, HMIS participating providers, and brainstorming ways to capture data from non-HMIS providers. HCs are facilitating the gather of feedback from the providers that tested the CES assessment tool. The State Strategy Team created 3 Action Teams to work on barriers identified and policies needed for hubs to make progress towards their 6 month aims. Tara explained the aims of the three paths. The Clear the Path Team aims to dedicate resources (new or existing) to increase coordinated outreach capacity in hubs where lack of outreach is identified as a barrier as well as aiming to streamline processes for access to permanent housing & reduce average length of time from identification to housed. The Quality Data Team aims are for Maine HMIS infrastructure to support Quality Data reporting. The Backbone Team is aiming to adopt a statewide inactive policy and design a 'Feedback Loop' for a State Learning System.
* **CES Update:** Erin K. presented the committee update. The assessment tool pilot has been tested at 4 shelters, 3 DV agencies and 3 outreach programs throughout rural and urban areas of the state. The Hub Coordinators are in the process of facilitating feedback on the tool. The committee continues to design a pilot period which will test all four phases of CE in two Hubs with the goal of starting the testing after the Policy and Procedures have been approved by the Board.
* **MCoC Update:** The MCoC is addressing the following topics:

1. **NOFO and SNOFO-** The NOFO was announced on August 1rst through the SNAPS Office. The due date for the Continuum application is September 30, 2022 which means all New and Renewal Applications will need to be submitted by August 31 in order to have time to review, score, and rank them all. While some of the questions are familiar, there are several new ones and all the data has changed meaning old questions may have very different answers. All YHDP renewal grants will be non- competitive but still have to be submitted in ESNAPS. The application is not yet open in ESNAPS therefore precise questions and funding amounts are unknown.
2. The SNOFO, even though it was released prior to the regular NOFO, it is not due until October 20. The RFP that was posted on August 1rst, asking that SNOFO Applications be submitted by September 14th. A bidder’s conference will be held virtually and all applicants need to attend.
3. The Board reviewed SPM updates and voted to approve issuing an RFP for a consultant to evaluate all CoC documents for racial equity.

**Council and Committee Updates:**

* **Regional Updates Region I-** The region has not yet met in August, therefore no updates given.

**Region II**- The region has not yet met in August, therefore no updates given.

**Region III-** Tracy H. noted there is an alarming increase of people living outside and the scope of the problem is not being fully recognized by local municipalities. Time limits on hotel stays and lack of housing were two ongoing issues discussed. Another election for Josh D’Alessio’s replacement will be necessary since the person nominated will not be able to fulfill the seat.

* **Homeless Policy Committee Update:**

**Federal:** Attention was brought to the T-HUD budget. On 7/20, the House passed its FY 23 T-HUD bill which would provide nearly $63 billion for HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs. If enacted, the House proposal would provide substantial federal investments in affordable homes and increase the availability of housing assistance to families with the greatest needs. The bill proposes significant increases to nearly all HUD programs compared to FY22.

In comparison, on 7/28 the Senate released its FY 23 T-HUD Budget, which would provide $70 billion in funding, including $10.3 billion in offsets, for HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs – an increase of $4.3 billion over FY22-enacted levels but $3 billion less than the House bill and $1.9 billion less than the amount proposed in President Biden’s FY23 budget request. Some programs would be funded at levels higher than the House bill, while others would receive less funding than FY 22 enacted levels or the amounts proposed by the House.

**State:** As of 5/9 the Legislature Adjourned Sine Die therefore no updates were reported.

* **Maine Shelter Network Update:** Noelle announced the network will be meeting this afternoon with Greg Payne. All shelters have varying needs yet all are experiencing increases with overall operational costs, particularly in relation to CMP rates and food costs.
* **PWLE:** Cheryl H. provided this month’s updates. The committee continues to recruit People with Lived Experience to attend SHC and CoC meetings. In the coming months, committee member’s plan on traveling and communicating throughout the state to teach others what they are doing and to learn what issues need to be addressed.

**Housing Updates:**

* **Greg Payne Governor’s Senior Advisor on Housing Policy:** Greg Payne brought the Council up-to-date on the policies being implemented through the governor’s office and legislature in response to the housing needs of Mainers. The allocation of $22 million in one-time General Fund dollars have been dedicated to create an Emergency Housing Relief Fund at MaineHousing to address homelessness, including providing rental assistance or appropriate housing for those who are staying in hotels or to create additional permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities, mental health challenges, or substance use disorders. Greg pointed to LD-2003 as an effort to increase the number of affordable units throughout Maine by requiring the state to provide municipalities with grants and technical assistance as they revise zoning regulations and update ordinances. Greg invited folks to email him with insights, suggestions and questions.
* **MSHA:** Lauren announced the funding for the two hotels in South Portland has been extended through the month of February 2023, mentioning FEMA funding will be used as long as the source is available. Home ARP funds have been scored with 13.2 million being awarded to provide services to people at risk of or are currently experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Solutions Rule and the ESG funding formula is being revised. A draft of the revisions will be presented to the CoC in September followed a public hearing on September 20th. and a public comment period.

**Service Updates: OMS:**  Heather Peltier attended today’s meeting to present a synopsis of the Office of MaineCare Services (OMS) Housing Outreach and Member Engagement Program. The goals of the HOME program are to improve wellbeing for MaineCare members with chronic health conditions who are experiencing long-term homelessness and to develop a MaineCare benefit to support housing sustainability, improved health outcomes, and to reduce overall costs of care. HOME includes comprehensive case management, care coordination, health promotion, comprehensive transitional care, individual and family support, and referral to community and social support services. Heather further explained the member must be diagnosed with two or more eligible chronic conditions or one chronic condition and be at risk for another chronic condition as well as experiencing long-term homelessness. HOME services are reimbursed via a PMPM rate and PMPM Providers must attest each billing month to the members they serve according to their eligibility and deliver at least one HOME service. The tiers are defined as: The Intensive Tier: member must currently be homeless and have Long-term Homelessness; or must currently be homeless and have previously been in the Intensive Tier. The Stabilization Tier: member must be housed and have a SPDAT or Youth-SPDAT score of 20 to 60. Maintenance Tier: member must be housed; and have a SPDAT or Y-SPDAT score of 4 to 19. If anyone has any questions, Heather provided her contact information.

**Six-month Strategy Committee Update**: Cullen screen shared an outline of a 6-month strategy for the SHC drafted during a sub-committee meeting held on August 5, 2022. The strategy is designed to address how the current homeless system in Maine has inflow but very little outflow.

The Statewide Homeless Council proposes that Maine pursue the following strategies to unstick the homeless system so it can be in a much-improved position in six months with outflow equal to inflow:

* **Rapid Resolution:** Umbrella for Diversion, Rapid Exit, and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
* **Landlord Engagement:** For both front end and post-housing, create and disseminate marketing materials, fund landlord incentives, provide training on effective LL Engagement strategies in each Regional Homeless Council by this fall.
* **Case Management/Outreach:** A lead professional worker who can help navigate and stabilize should be placed outside of shelters (in other organizations) as well as inside shelters. Allow broader access to STEP and Section 8 housing choice vouchers and LL incentives to stabilize populations in need. Boost the supply of flexible outreach workers so that people outside can bypass shelters and go directly into housing.
* Enhancing shelter: Provide resources and training intended to support shelters in lowering barriers. This can include training, additional staffing, expansion resources, needle exchange and safer use strategies, and warming centers. Ensure there is preparation for a warming space in each HUB. Develop a plan to replace lost shelter beds in each HUB – consider using other spaces temporarily.

The budget, totaling 2,432,000, was explained by allocating costs Diversion, Rapid Exit Tool box, Rapid Re-Housing, Landlord Engagement, Case Management/Outreach and Enhancement of Shelter by lowering barriers to access.

*Tracy H. motioned for the SHC to accept the 6-month strategy August 2022 – February 2023 plan as drafted. David M. seconded. It was noted during discussion with the high costs of staffing and administration costs the 100,000 per each site may not be enough. None opposed. No one abstained. Passed unanimously*.

**The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022.**