VA Maine healthcare System,

Augusta, ME

**HVAC Quarterly Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date: 5 December 2023 | Time Started: 0930 | Time Ended: 1004 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ATTENDEES NAME** | **TITLE** |
| Amy Morin | Togus Homeless Programs Coordinator |
| Wendy Thomas-Blais | HUD-VASH Program Manager |
| Barrett Fisher | Claims Supervisors, Bureau of Veteran’s Services |
| Laura Clark | VHS Preble Street, Program Director |
| Kaitlin Plourde | Preble Street Veterans Housing Services Supervisor |
| Emily Richards | Homeless Services Hub Coordinator |
| Brian Bouthot | VOA Northern New England Operations Coordinator Veteran Services |
| Ray Michaud | Veteran’s Inc Regional Manager |
| Mike Merrill | Director of Homeless Services VOA |
| Dan Hodgkins | Senior Director of Social Work, Preble Street |
| Jessica Grossman | Program Support Assistant |

**MINUTES:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TOPIC/ISSUE** | **DISCUSSION** | **FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS** |
| **Approval of September Minutes** | Amy* Doing a slightly different format to try and keep things organized
* If everyone could please sign in to the chat with who you are and what agency you’re with
* We need to do an approval of minutes for the 5 September meeting
* Barrett, I’ll let you take the lead on that

Barrett* I wasn’t at the September meeting

Amy* You can just do the motion

Barrett* Do we have a motion to approve the minutes from the sep meeting

Brian* I approve

Ray* I second
 |  |
| **Written Standards** | Amy* We are still working on the service delivery and policies for the written standards
* We’re very close to being done with that and we’ve had a couple times where we wanted to come together as a group to go over it
* We continue to move forward and I anticipate that by the end of this winter we’ll have our final drafts ready, especially with Jessica on board because she’s helping us proofread and organize to get that completed.
 |  |
| **BNL / HMIS Updates** | Amy* BNL updates, Wendy?

Wendy* I think the finalization of the written standards will reinforce the data entry and commitment from the organization
* We are unfortunately behind schedule with the BNL being utilized
* One of the things that we have to look at as a community is the commitment for data entry into HMIS
* The framework is there, what we’re not seeing is the commitment, there’s a lot of missing information
* It comes down to the BNL assessment portion for HMIS
* I am working closely with HMIS, and even though we’ve had some staffing changes, we are still getting together
* There were questions about how the information was being pulled
* We did trainings about the launch date back in July or August and we checked in again to find out how things were going and answer questions
* I can certainly do that again if people think it would help to get that BNL assessment completed
* There’s no information to pull if it’s not being entered

Amy* I think you zipped through the slides, Wendy, but that was all here
* We had the timeline for the next round

Wendy* I think we have the information, it’s just not being entered into HMIS
* I think that’s something we can work on in the working groups to identify who is going to go in and get the data

Amy* So it’s not an agency issue, it’s an HMIS issue?

Wendy* No it’s not HMIS, it’s the agencies not putting the data in, and we don’t know which ones
* It might come down to which agencies will own a Veteran to ensure the data is entered properly
* We have to figure out how we’ll identify, because I cannot tell people to do it

Amy* So some data is missing

Wendy* They may not know or may not understand why we need this piece, so it might be that further training is needed to elicit the commitment
 |  |
| **Trends and Challenges** | Amy* Trends and challenges
* We’re still seeing a significant lack of housing
* Staffing issues are ongoing
* Transportation is a huge challenge, even in the well-populated areas
* Elderly Veterans who need a higher level of care are experiencing homelessness because they need more care than shelters can provide and assisted living and nursing homes are at capacity
* Any other updates Wendy on HMIS BNL?

Wendy* I think we’re good unless people have questions
 |  |
| **38K Challenge Update** | Amy* Any updates, Dan or Kaitlin on the 100 Veterans in 100 days

Kaitlin* We’re still trying to finalize data from November, so we may not have those numbers until the end of Dec
* We’ve decided to continue with incentives and the landlord outreach we’ve been doing
* All in case consultation

Amy* Do we have any rough numbers, even for the first round?

Kaitlin* I believe we are probably in the high 80s at the end of the challenge, but I can’t say for sure without looking in the database
* Is there anything you’re looking for specifically?

Amy* Whatever you guys are counting for the 100 days challenge
* I reached out to Dan, but I don’t think I’ve heard back from him

Kaitlin* I can get it from you, but I believe mid-high 80s at the end of the challenge
 |  |
| **VA Goals** | Amy* Our goals for 2023, as of the end of October
* Our goal was to house 146 homeless Veterans and we have already housed 167 homeless veterans, 114% of our goal
* Goal two we are struggling a little bit
* Our goal was to keep returns to homelessness under 5%
* So far we have 9 Veterans who returned to homelessness which is 5.4%

Kaitlin* I had a question about that
* When Veterans are returning to homelessness, are there questions we ask them about their return?
* Are we tracking why they are returning to homelessness?

Amy* Yes, we should be, if they’re in your program that should be part of the Homeless assessment
* Or sometimes it’s a data question and we find it’s a data error and there really wasn’t a return, and we’re able to go in and scrub that data
* There’s a lot of national emphasis being put on this goal so we can dedicate resources to preventing recidivism
* For goal 3, we hit that goal back in June or July
* I anticipate that 141% of our goal to continue to rise
 |  |
| **BFZ Goal** | Amy* BFZ goal was for Dan, but I don’t see him here, so I can go over this, and Laura feel free to jump in
* This one is slightly different, it’s measuring outflow vs inflow, and we don’t have any new updates
* Any new business that agencies want to bring up?

Ray* The BFZ, is that the same as functional zero they did a few years ago?

Amy* Yes, it is
* The idea behind functional zero is that we know we’ll never reach complete zero as in there are no homeless people left, but that we are housing people more quickly than we have people entering the system

Ray* When we hit that mark, we’re not going to have a parade or anything?
* So many of you have worked so hard, I worry that if people find out we’re at this functional zero, people will want to move on to something else

Wendy* That’s a great concern, and one of the things with the functional zero is that we’ve created a foundation to allow us to reassess the progress of what we’ve built
* There will be some type of celebration
* But the idea is that we’ve created a system to assess, evaluate, and move forward, so that it is sustainable and won’t just be abandoned
* We need to be talking about the sustainability of the programs that we’re putting into place, and our language should reflect that
 |  |
| **Stand Downs** | Amy* Any program updates?
* Barrett, do you want to speak to the stand downs

Barrett* We had a total of 78 attend, 39 homeless
* We realized after the fact that Brewer has zero tolerance for homeless, so having a stand down there was not beneficial
* We had 67 males, 7 females, and 11 total that were newly identified as homeless
* Overall I think it was pretty successful other than Brewer
* Next year we want to do a better job of area recon ahead of time so that we’re in an area that is accessible to the homeless population
* The career center in Bangor seems like a good location

Amy* Lessons learned are always a good thing
* Sometimes you don’t figure it out until after

Barrett* We had a leader summit after the stand downs and someone at that meeting brought it up
* When Fedcap offered to let us use their parking lot, I guess they didn’t know that either

Amy* For the 11 who were identified, how were they identified and were they shared with the CE systems to ensure we’re outreaching to them?

Barrett* They were shared with other providers and Matt and Tom have checked to make sure that those 11 are in HMIS

Amy* Wonderful
 |  |
| **SSVF Update** | Laura* I have a program update from SSVF
* We hired a second rapid resolution specialist to help on our intake line
* We’ve discovered that our intake line gets a lot of phone calls
* I wanted to share some data from that
* Our rapid rehousing specialists are responsible for enrolling clients and doing in takes but also diverting people away from the homeless service system
* November we had a total of 77 unique calls, and 30 of them enrolled in our services, so over half were diverted away from our services or sent to other programs, if they were not being evicted or becoming literally homeless

Amy* A – Any other program updates?
 |  |
| **Housing Liaison Update** | Kaitlin* I have a little update with the housing liaisons
* In the next few weeks we’re going to start a follow-up protocol with landlords who have been housing clients
* We’ll be sending them a thank you letter and 30-day and 60-day follow up phone calls to check in about how things are going and asking about other openings they might have

Amy* Any other updates?
* Concerns, challenges, barriers, good feedback, success aspects?
 |  |
| **Next Meeting** | Amy* Our next meeting is going to be in March, on the 5th
* Do I have a motion to adjourn

Mike* I make that motion Amy

Barrett* I second

Brian* I second
 |  |

( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved

Amy Morin Jessica Grossman

Chair Recorder

Distribution: Members