INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
Meeting Summary Notes
Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Members (Present or Represented)
Brecher, Lindsey (for Jonathan Brice)
Emerson, Kim
Harris, Amanda
Harris, Rita (for Stacy Spann)
Horton-Newell, Amy
Kauffman, Louise
Kirk Susan
Leventhal, George
Rock, Shane
Roynestad, Brian
Schuchman, Abe
Seidel, Stan
Sinclair-Smith, Susie
Snuggs, Clarence
Stiegler, Liana (for Senator Zucker)
Tracey, Brian
Wellington, Janice (for Sheryl Chapman)

Members (Excused)
Ahluwalia, Uma

Members (Absent)
Crowel, Raymond
Davis, Betsy
Newton, Bridget
Thames, Jeffrey
Wilds, Moses

Guests
Avellanet, Felix
Carey, Vania
Ezrin, Debbie
Kedia, Soma
Marrone, April
Fox Morrill, Priscilla
McMillan, Linda
O'Connell, Megan

Staff
Ball, Kim
Black, Sara
Childress-Harvell, Aneise
Dickson, Tia
Huggins, Gloria
Kelly, LaSonya
Leslie, George
Matthews, Stacey
Rickford, Eric
Sierra, Sharon
Soni, Nili
Wellman, Catherine

Preliminary results of gaps analysis – Amanda Harris and Darlene Mathews
The methodology of the gaps analysis is a combination of qualitative and quantitive data approved by the Operations Committee. The information was gathered from:
- Service Providers surveys
- Focus groups with individuals and families
- The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) (i.e. Federal-level Reports of Housing Inventory; Annual Homeless Assessment Report; Point-in-time Report and Budget data)
- The quantitive data was analyzed with the use of two tools:
  - Homelessness Supportive Housing Opportunities Planner (SHOP Tool) and
  - the Homeless Evaluator Tool

Darlene presented slides and charts reviewing one year of the Single and Family systems outcome and return on investment.

➔ **HIGHLIGHT**: The analysis highlighted that increasing positive outcomes (exits to permanent housing solutions) during the year produced greater rate of return and lowered the cost of the intervention.

Recidivism Rate – Recurrence of Homelessness (2014-2016)		
Single System	27%	Individuals who exited the system to a positive destination and subsequently returned to the shelter system.
Permanent Supportive Housing	24%	Families who exited the system to a positive destination and subsequently returned to the shelter system.

Shane Rock asked the question whether "exit status" is the appropriate measure because it does not consider longevity of placement or whether the person returned to homelessness. Exit status is a snapshot in time and does not show if people remained in permanent housing for any length of time.

Amanda Harris commented that the data is only as reliable as to the information is in the system. The data shows on the single side that 90% leave to unknown destinations. This is high number of unknowns resulting from incomplete data. One example why information is incomplete, is there is no tracking of individuals who leave the winter overflow shelters.

Brian Tracy asked about benchmark information from other jurisdictions to compare whether the costs that the County is spending is reasonable. Darlene shared that there is not much data from other jurisdictions. Montgomery County is unique in capturing budget data and location plays a role in costs. In large urban areas, housing costs will be higher. The costs presented on the slide are a combination of government dollars (Federal, HUD and County dollars).

Internal Recommendations Highlights:
Budget Organization –
- Segregating budget information by component type and project capacity.
- Track cost of program models by subpopulations (family and single) is also critical to determining the true investments is certain interventions.

Data Focused Decision Making –
- **Create a Data and Research Manager** to provide leadership level to focus on ensuring that the community has enough information to make data informed decision, reports development and outcome tracking.
- **Hire additional HMIS System Administration** to manage data and move HMIS under Data and Research Manager.

Critical Parts of the Homeless System not in HMIS –
- **Prevention Programs** must be entered HMIS to ensure that there is no duplication in services within a period and to track recidivism
- **Exit Assistance** must be entered HMIS to ensure that there is no duplication in services within a period and to track recidivism
- **Diversion** is a relatively new service model that is becoming popular in homeless services. To track the effectiveness of this technique, the average financial investment and the quality of the services provided this information should be in HMIS. It's also critical to be able to track how many clients received diversion that ultimately entered the shelter system.
- **Intensive Team Meetings** are a case management technique that has been identified as having success at exiting families from shelter. Tracking when this occurs and the outcome would be critical to determine the technique that should be expanded or perhaps provided earlier.
- **Clients Who Do Not Enter the System**: Clients who are denied shelter because they are not from Montgomery County and clients who are interested in making an application for shelter but change their mind during the process should also be tracked in the system. This information will help identify trends in regional homeless issues.

Amanda reported that the immediate responses from DHHS are:
- Exploring implementing the new reporting Mediware Information System that will expand reporting and enable providers to access reports
- Ms. Catherine Wellman was hired to provide additional HMIS support.
- Exploring the creation of a new Data and Research Manager position

- Examining the structure of SNH to increase leadership to manage the increased workload
- Reviewing SNH contracts to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency in serving the clients. Many contracts comingle the service they provide and we are in the process of separating the scope of service to ensure the capturing of clear and accurate data.
- Chronic and Veteran dashboards have been added to the new Homelessness Website (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Homelessness) we have added dashboards for Chronic and Veteran homelessness.

Policy Consideration and response –
- **Remove Substance Abuse Screening** as a required activity to obtain shelter—Drug screening will be removed as a requirement for shelter effective July 2017
    - Families reported at focus groups that they felt disrespected, targeted and that the screening was subjective (younger families screened more often).
    - Substance abuse screening is not an evidence-based intervention
    - Drug screening should not be administered at the crisis junction.
    - Drug screening should be based on behavior and given after obtaining a signed participation acknowledgement.

➔ **ACTION**: Research and provide details at next meeting on the origin of the screening, the intended purpose and whether screening is a requirement for group home single living and permanent supportive housing.

➔ **MOTION**: Councilmember George Leventhal motioned that drug substance abuse screening be removed as a requirement for shelter. Serves little purpose and creates barriers for people seeking shelter and assistance from County programs. The motion was unanimously adopted.

- **Reasonable Accommodation Policy**—Enacted full assessment of reasonable accommodations policies in all programs
    - Reasonable accommodations exist to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the array of programs offered in the shelter
    - The CoC should have appropriate accommodation policies in place
    - Service providers should be trained to help people with disabilities access programs
- **Family Separation Act and Equal Access**
    - The Family Separation Act is part of the HEARTH (Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing) Act and the Emergency Solution Grant that says any families are served no matter how they present
    - Equal Access is a more general term ensuring that all individuals are served equally
    - The CoC should ensure:
        - Program Providers are trained to assist all presenting families
        - Shelters have enough space to accommodate all types of families
        - These policies are incorporated into the CoC's written standards

Initial Draft Right Sizing
A person-centric system is one where there is community acknowledgement that the only real resolution to homelessness is housing.

Single System Highlights:
- Building out Coordinated Entry System.
- Focusing on achieving a 60-day length of stay with positive outcomes
- Build in more employment services on the front end
- Identifying and existing program that could be reorganized to provide crisis beds

Family Services Highlights:
- Analyze intake process and workflow for families (what is triad and what is assessment)
- Provide comprehensive housing search assistance for families in motels
- Removing zip code barriers for assessment to ensure that families can present at any Regional Office for services
- Better access to childcare, employment and services

Project Expansion:
- Scale Rapid Rehousing to its current potential to 450 units to help working individuals and families exit the system
- Expand Division Program to help vulnerable families and singles at risk of homelessness to avoid entry into the system

What the CoC has done on rightsizing the system:
- Increase Permanent Supportive Housings by increasing housing stock
- Review family coordinated entry system and testing various assessment / screening tools
- Currently, staff is receiving training on the Family VISPDAT.
- Modify the acuity scale
- Committed to removing zip code barriers for assessments

➔ **ANNOUNCEMENT**: Several months ago, the US ICH Supportive Housing Opportunity Planner tool was used to derive the goal to end chronic homelessness in Montgomery County to be 193 homes. Amanda reported that the goal has been met and we have the resources to house the 193 chronically households by the end of 2017.

➔ **ACTION**: Mr. Leventhal asked the group to formulate an ask for him to present to the Office of Legislative Oversight for their review. The assignment proposed was to have OLO do an inventory of housing programs from (DHHS, DHCA and HOC) for organizational review. Examining duplication of services and determining when overlap is necessary and whether services should be consolidated to one agency.

Next Steps:
- Operations Committee to make recommendations about what to include in the formal Gaps Analysis Report.
- Operations Committee to make recommendations about priorities.
- Report and priorities for rightsizing the system presented to ICH in September.
- In the fall, host a community-wide meeting to review the 10-Year Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, Gaps Analysis Report and develop an implementation plan.
    - Do we have the right committees? Do we need a family and a youth subcommittee?
    - How can the ICH be involved in the collective Impact decisions – funding and priority programs

Next Meeting
Wednesday, September 13, 2017, | 3:30-5:30 p.m. Location Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 1st Floor Conference Room.