

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Minutes September 18, 2014

Jeff Tardif	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Family Shelter
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Support Services
Brian Marchant	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept., Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
John Monahan	Homeless Voices for Justice
Jeff Vane	Homeless Voices for Justice
Tom Ptacek	Preble Street
Jamie Lasden	Preble Street
Ali Lovejoy	Preble Street
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Jenny Stasio	Family Crisis
Carol Kulesza	VA
Marcus Giordano	YCSPi
Shana Pike	SteppingStones
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Tom Natalie	Milestone Foundation
Carol Schreck	Portland Community Health Center
Kelly Paris	Maine Behavioral Health
Carol Snyder	Logisticare
Heather Rhoda	Frannie Peabody Center
Elise “Lisa” Mace	MBH – Access Team
Chris Bicknell	The Opportunity Alliance

I. Introductions

Jeff welcomed everyone and brief introductions were made. Jeff informed everyone that Bob Duranleau, Cindy Namer, Rob Parritt, and Jon Bradley had another commitment and were unable to attend the meeting.

II. August 2014 Bed Usage Statistics – Rob Parritt

Jeff reviewed the August 2014 statistics ([see statistics](#)). He pointed out that overall numbers are down, with adolescents staying the same, families going up, and adults showing a good drop.

III. Shelter Matrix – Jeff Tardif

Jeff stated that the Family Shelter numbers are up, putting them into the hotels regularly. Housing placements are down, as Portland has a very low vacancy rate (approximately 1-2%). Jeff and Aaron discussed the fact that 41 Chestnut St. was recently purchased by the same I-95 Portfolio that purchased 193 Congress St., causing the shelters to scramble to keep housing for clients with subsidies. The housing staff let clients know that if they are looking for housing in Portland, it will be a while.

Oxford Street appears to be on track with average bed nights in their hopes of being under 200 by December. Jeff stated out that housing placements seem down, but they are focusing on long-term stayers, which has helped significantly with lowering bed nights. Statistics show that the majority of individuals in adult shelters find housing with minimal help within 30 days. Brian agreed, saying they just housed two of their top bednight users, eliminating a total of over 700 bed nights. As for locations, Brian pointed out that people are being less picky; Jeff agreed, stating other communities are more appealing when the rents are much cheaper.

IV. OSS Overflow Shelter Update – Brian Marchant

Brian discussed the down trend with using the overflow due to the housing of their longest term stayers.

V. *Home to Stay Program Update – Aaron Geyer*

Aaron provided an update on the Home To Stay Program. 28 HCV vouchers were used between the shelters; they met their mark on spending for STEP in mid-July, allowing the leftover money from other agencies to be used by all providers in a pool. This has allowed for his program to issue 12 more vouchers, with four more lined up for next week.

VI. *Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program – Aaron Geyer*

Aaron provided an update on the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program. They have spent approximately one-fourth of their budget and are looking for referrals. Clients must be homeless and meet the income requirements.

All referrals may be sent to:

Aaron Geyer, (207) 482-5131, aeg@portlandmaine.gov

Kelsey Tanning, (207) 482-5208, kt@portlandmaine.gov

VII. *MaineCare Rides (Logisticare) Presentation– Carol Snyder*

Carol Snyder from Logisticare introduced herself and handed out packets of information for the group. Logisticare has taken over broker rides for most of the MaineCare clients in Cumberland County. This is a service only for MaineCare clients, and covers day centers, doctors' appointments, and other allowable MaineCare reasons. They also coordinate standing orders for individuals attending ongoing appointments/treatments like dialysis or counseling. However, they cannot provide services for individuals receiving free services, like free mammograms.

This is a contract service and do not provide direct services for Cumberland County: all members will receive rides from local taxi or transportation agencies. For those with access to cars, they can call and schedule an appointment, but state "I want mileage" and they can be reimbursed at \$0.41/mi including tolls. They must be verified, and the check will be cut to the driver.

Logisticare does require 48 hours notice, with the exception of urgent need verified by a clinician's office. **They do not handle crisis or emergency transportation.**

If a child is under 17 and must travel alone, a consent form must be signed. Due to the nature of this being a shared ride service, members need to be ready for pick up 30 minutes before their scheduled pickup time. Bus passes are provided for those who prefer mass transit.

Lisa asked whether there is anything for individuals without MaineCare? Carol pointed out that Regional Transportation Programs, Community Concepts, etc will all still be in place.

Contact info:

Carol Snyder

(877) 659-1301

Carol.snyder@logisticare.com

855-608-5179 (Problems)

877-659-1305 (Facilities)

855-608-5178 (ride scheduling for Cumberland County)

There is a web portal to schedule rides for case managers. Call the facilities line or Carol to get set up.

VIII. *Homeless Voices for Justice*

John updated everyone on the DHHS rally that occurred this week. The new building in South Portland appears to be going up rather quickly. HVJ is also working on the "You Don't Need a Home to Vote"

campaign.

Jamie updated everyone on the dates for gubernatorial candidates: Michaud is coming to the soup kitchen on Thursday, September 25 at 9am; Cutler will be visiting on October 27; LePage has declined the invitation.

IX. Federal and State Legislation – Cullen Ryan

Cullen gave an update on federal government, which is still in a holding pattern regarding the HUD funding. While it is looking like we are reaching a resolution, we will have to wait to see how things play out. It may pass enough to fund HUD to carry through December. Then it will be voted on an omnibus bill or just another “getting by” delay.

State: The lawsuit with Portland, MMA, Westbrook v. the State for General Assistance reimbursement on undocumented immigrant clients. Vickey- there was a slight update on the undocumented immigrants. Portland City Council has had many meetings regarding the issue since they have been advised not to submit for reimbursement. They are looking at other avenues to cover the loss of possible total reimbursement.

The Governor is looking to cut down SNAP benefits to only three months for a 3-year span. Jamie suggested that case managers call the Maine Hunger Initiative at PS to leave stories for testimony and advocacy to combat the issue. Or email MHI@preblestreet.org

Cullen stated this is a good time to get Representatives out to visit shelters and soup kitchens. Senator King will be touring various residences and how Section 8 and other service programs.

X. Other Business

Carol Kulesza stated that the latest issuance of VASH vouchers is soon to be announced.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, October 16, 2014
8:30 – 10:00 AM

Refugee Services Area, 190 Lancaster Street

Please contact Robert Duranleau, Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division at 482-5124 if you should have any agenda items for the next meeting.