

**Minutes**  
**Mental Health Planning Council**  
**Housing Committee**  
**Wednesday, April 5, 2017**

Attendees:

- Chris Zabik , DMH-WM (via telephone)
- Dennis McCrory, MD, MRC
- Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates (Co-Chair)
- Eric Shupin, CHAPA
- Nancy Flynn-Barvick, CHAPA
- Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH-CO (via Telephone)
- Joel Danforth, DMH-CO
- Jeff Chasse, Vinfen
- Mary Callanan, MAMH
- Genevieve Mulligan, MAMH
- Megan Wiechnik, NAMI
- Paul McPartland, DHCD
- Janet Marsden, DMH-Homeless Outreach
- Ayana Gonzalez, DHCD
- Maureen Donovan, NAMI (via telephone)
- John Murphy, Vinfen (via telephone)
- Ken McIntyre, Bay Cove H.S.
- Sarah Coombs, Bay Cove H.S.
- Linda McMahan, MassHousing
- Gary Comeau, DMH-NE (via telephone)
- Joe Valley, DMH-CO

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The meeting was chaired by Adrienne Cassidy, co-chair Joe Finn was out sick . Adrienne called the meeting to order at 10:08.

The minutes from the January 18 meeting were presented and approved upon a motion by Dennis McCrory and seconded by Jeff Chasse.

**Actions to Expand DMH Housing**

Danna M. stated that the MAMH “People Are Waiting” report is in its final draft and expects to issue it in a few weeks after peer review is completed along with any final edits. The report speaks to the need for expanding supportive housing to address clients who are “stuck” on the streets, shelters, ER, acute in-patient and State Hospitals.

Danna referenced discharges from private psychiatric hospitals to homelessness as being an area of concern to be highlighted in the report as it underscores the need for supportive housing. She noted that hospitals reported to DMH Licensing in 2015 595 discharges to shelters and 1,647 discharges to the streets; in 2016 private hospitals reported 1,161 discharges to shelter and 1,522 discharges to the streets. (The private hospitals report discharges, not individuals)

She made mention of the CSPECH study that pointed to significant cost savings of about \$11,000/yr./client by providing housing and services to homeless individuals with mental illness avoiding hospitalization, ER visits, arrests, courts and jails.

MAMH is asking the Legislature for \$1M in DMH-Rental Subsidy Program funds for FY18 that is projected to house about 75 individuals based upon Fair Market Rents. There is strong support within the Administration for this.

Maureen D. thanked Danna and MAMH for their work noting that her son who has a severe mental illness was homeless for several years and accessing affordable housing was a major barrier.

Ayana G. spoke about the DHCD Affordable Housing Trust Fund that recently announced funding of 7 projects representing an investment of \$3.4M; two of these multi-family projects have FCF-DMH units, Abby's House (5) and Worcester Common Ground (2). She also pointed out the FCF-DMH capital pipeline now has some 55 units in the que representing a total of 7 projects. DHCD is also providing MRVP project-based subsidies to many of these units.

### **ATARP Housing Models**

Adrienne C. introduced Sarah and Ken from Bay Cove H.S. who manage one of the 5 DMH housing programs serving homeless individuals with co-occurring psychiatric and substance abuse disorders. BCHS reported their clients are doing well, remaining in their housing and have become much less dependent upon the use of alcohol and other drugs because of their stable housing situation. In the chaos of the streets or in shelters elevated levels of stress foster substance use, placed in housing much of that stress is eliminated. Adrienne echoed this view based on her own ATARP program experience at Advocates where they have taken individuals from the woods and placed them in housing which has resulted in a noticeable reduction in substance use and increased stability. This Housing-First approach has shown great success and much promise.

### **Education and Training**

Megan W. briefly recapped the February meeting of the Education Stakeholders Subcommittee and the effort to look at short-term and long-term activities. She would like to conduct a survey of DMH providers to assess what their housing training needs and will work with the Subcommittee to develop this survey. She circulated a couple of examples of housing training outlines that were provided by Housing Solutions of the South Shore and talked about coordinating with DMH to host trainings that might be offered on an regional/Area basis.

Dennis Mc. asked about making the connection between recovery and housing specifically addressing employment as a step in the recovery process; he used the term "homeing" to help connect the two ideas. Ken said that providing services is far less an issue for the ATARP program; locating the affordable housing is a major challenge and would welcome assistance.

The Subcommittee will meet again on **Thursday, April 27 @10:00** at DMH Central Office to discuss their plans and activities and will reach out to members of the full Committee to ask for their input.

### **Old / New Business**

Eric S. talked about CHAPA's work in advocating for affordable housing and specifically the Housing Bond Bill which they are requesting \$1.7B that covers some 7 programs including public housing and FCF. He noted the strong support of Rep. Kevin Honan the co-chair of the Housing Committee. He also spoke

about housing production programs and zoning changes intended to allow multi-family housing by right. Eric will inform the Committee when Leg. Hearing dates are coming up.

**Next Meeting:**            Wednesday, May 17, at 10:00