

Minutes
Mental Health Planning Council
Housing Committee
Wednesday, July 24, 2019

Attendees:

- Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates (co-chair)
- Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH-CO (via Telephone)
- Dennis McCrory, MD
- Andrew Fagan, Advocates
- Jill Gichuhi , NAMI
- Virginia Griffin, Bay Cove
- Andrew Roach, Vinfen
- Andrew Fagan, Advocates
- Ron Hayes, Open Sky (via Telephone)
- Norma Laurent, Bay Cove
- Kim Clougherty, DMH-CO
- Stephanie Kan, DHCD
- Cecilia Woodworth, DHCD
- Chris Zabik, DMH-WM (via telephone)
- Michelle Cormier, DMH-CO
- Catia Sharp, MAMH
- Jessica Larochelle, MAMH
- Gary Comeau, DMH-NE (via Telephone)
- Joe Vallely, DMH-CO
- Excused, Joe Finn, MHSA, (co-chair)

Welcome

Adrienne C. called the meeting to order at 10:05; she noted that Joe Finn her Co-Chair was unavailable to attend. All attendees were invited to introduce themselves and comment on the agenda. Andrew R. made the motion to accept the minutes from the April meeting, seconded by Stephanie K., the minutes were voted and approved.

Housing Development Conference

Jessica from MAMH spoke about the success of the housing conference in 2018 and the desire to build on that experience. She noted that due to the stigma associated with MI there is a need to educate housing developers not only about the value of FCF-DMH financing but, to help them to understand mental health conditions, the challenges people face, and the all-important supports available to people receiving DMH services.

She indicated that in the planning they would be working with stakeholders to develop the best format, identify the targeted audience, and be sure it reflected a diverse group of participants and presenters.

Kim C. mentioned the DMH Area Boards whose members include real estate, banking, legal professions who should be targeted to attend and share their personal stories.

Jill G. from NAMI mentioned that about 40% of the calls that come into their COMPASS line looking for assistance are related to the need for housing.

DMHRSP Expansion

Joe V. reported that there were 168 units/clients leased in FY19 with the added \$2M. The field did an outstanding job in the second half of FY19 to secure the units. Adrienne from Advocates acknowledged how challenging it was to lease up in the very “hot” rental market but, there are many good owners willing to take the chance if you know how to approach them.

Stephanie K. from DHCD noted that efforts were made to respond more quickly to rent increase requests. Adrienne thanked her for helping to make that happen. She underscored the client’s perspective when seeing someone move into an apartment that encourage others and instills a feeling that they too can do this.

Dennis McC. commented that that the program is bringing about a cultural change that is great to witness.

DMHRSP Educational Video

Michelle C, DMH Communications Office shared the preliminary video she is working on and asked for feedback. The feedback included slowing down the speed, make script simpler and avoid terms the general population would not understand, underscore on-going support for clients is available. The characters in the video are limited and don’t reflect the diversity in the population served. The script is focused on provider-based only.

Michelle said there are unfortunate limitations to the software video, she will attempt to adjust where she can to make it more inclusive. She thanked Adrienne and others for their help and will continue to refine the video as it develops. She hopes to have a completed version sometime in early winter for review.

DMH Housing Plan

Joe reported that the Commissioner is asking for another \$1M in DMHRSP funding for FY20. MAMH has been leading the advocacy effort along with NAMI. Staff training and education will be pursued as well as part of the plan focusing on housing search and how to keep clients in their housing. The Development Conference is also part of the plan.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 21