

GREATER NASHUA CONTINUUM OF CARE MEETING MINUTES

Nashua City Hall Auditorium

March 5, 2014

www.nashua-coc.org

Cate Sementa, Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 8:05AM. Introductions were made by all, and the attendance sheet passed for signatures. Newcomers were asked to add their email to the list if they would like to be added to the GNCOC mailing list. The meeting format that alternates monthly between presentations and committee reports was explained to the group.

JANUARY MEETING MINUTES: Group was reminded that the February meeting was cancelled because of a snow storm. The minutes of January 2014 were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Bob Mack, which was seconded by Barbara Alves. Minutes were approved.

AMERICORP VISTA: The VISTA who has been working with the GNCOC for the past several months has resigned to take another position. The Executive Committee decided that the position would not be reposted and will decide at the next Executive Committee what needs to be done to get a refund.

LETTER OF SUPPORT: Harbor Homes has requested a letter of support for the renewal of their SSVF program. Ana read the letter. Abigail made a motion to approve the letter of support; Bob seconded. The motion passed with two abstentions (Cate and Peter).

Presentation:

Access to Health Care Workgroup/Community Health Improvement Plan

Ashley Conley, Epidemiologist for the City of Nashua, presented information about the work being done by the Access to Health Care workshop that is part of the Community Health Improvement Plan. The plan is the result of a Community Health Assessment conducted in 2012. Three priorities were identified as part of the assessment: Access to Healthcare, Obesity and Mental Health. Currently individual workgroups are working in each of the priority areas.

Goals of the Access to Healthcare workgroup were to increase access to affordable healthcare, increase communication and identify gaps in services. They gathered information through a series of focus groups held in Nashua, Milford and Merrimack. The focus groups asked two main questions: what is the biggest problem faced with regard to access to healthcare and what would help/improve access to healthcare. Focus group respondents indicated that they didn't know where to go for affordable care; they also cited a difficulty in understanding medical jargon and their insurance coverage. Not having material available in Spanish was another barrier cited. It was also mentioned that the increase in technology resulted in a decrease the personalized care provided at the doctor's office.

Other problem areas identified included transportation, low cost dentures and insurance for healthy adults.

The following action items were identified by the group: provide info on low-cost insurance options; educate organizations as to the availability of low-cost healthcare options; provide educational material to foster self-advocacy and provide information on preventive screenings to the area's low-income population.

As the group moves forward, additional areas can/will be addressed, including prescription assistance programs, compiling a list of local support groups, working to increase dental services available and reducing the literacy level necessary to read/understand medical documents.

Both the feasibility of the each action item and the likelihood to effect change were taken into consideration as the list was drawn up.

The group put together and delivered information kits to food pantries, school districts, welfare offices, etc. The kits contain brochures from various health-related organizations, information about 2-1-1 and a one-page flyer listing health resources in the Greater Nashua area. The flyer is available in both English and Spanish. The information is also available on the CD that was included.

A final report from the Access to Healthcare workgroup is in the final stages of being written.

Members of the GNCOC had several questions. Availability/cost of the shingles vaccine was discussed with no easy answer given. Public Health has limited quantities available. These are usually gone quickly. Ashley mentioned that a State Adult Immunization program is being considered which may make the vaccine more readily available.

Bob Mack noted that with all the changes happening in healthcare because of the ACA, everything seems confusing at this point.

Peter Kelleher noted that unknowns surrounding Medicaid expansion is another element that could affect the group's long-term work plan.

Ashley indicated that given the current state of change, concentrating on the education piece is their primary goal – as well as providing tools to increase the ability of individuals to advocate for themselves.

Getting information translated into other languages continues to be an issue. Ana offered to help get information translated into Portuguese.

Announcements

- **Tom Lopez** announced that the next Employment Connect meeting would be held at 2:00pm on Tuesday, March 11 at the Adult Learning Center.
- **Laurel Redden** thanked the group for their support for the housing voucher legislation currently being debated in Concord.
- **Beverly Doolan** announced that the current Community Health Assessment is holding a series of community forums in March and April. Everyone is encouraged to attend. The first is on March 27 at Nashua High School South from 6-7pm. The other is scheduled for April 16 at Nashua High School North from 6-7pm. She will forward the flyer to the entire GNCOC so they can alert others.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.

Minutes taken by Beth Todgham, Southern New Hampshire Services