

Greater Nashua Continuum of Care
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2010
www.nashua-coc.org

Call to order: Chair Wendy LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 8:05am. All present introduced themselves, and visitors were welcomed.

Minutes from the meeting of February 3, 2010 were reviewed. There were no changes made. Tony Epaphras motioned to accept the minutes. Sarah Gagnon seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Two presentations were made to the GNCOC at this meeting.

Presentations:

Maureen Ryan, the BHHS (Bureau of Homeless and Housing Services) Bureau Administrator made a comprehensive presentation regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). Ms. Ryan explained that NH was allocated \$4.6 Million of the \$1.5 Billion designated by Congress for communities to provide financial assistance to prevent homelessness and/or assist those already homeless to quickly be re-housed and stabilized. She discussed the four areas of eligible activities including 1) financial assistance; 2) housing relocation and stabilization services (case management); 3) data collection and evaluation (HMIS); and 4) administrative costs.

The eligible program participants are individuals or families who are either housed, but are at risk of becoming homeless, or currently are homeless. The intent of the program is to hopefully help people before they become homeless, and to provide for better and faster stabilization. Often it is a temporary situation, such as job loss that triggers the eligibility of a participant. Household income must be at or below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) in order to meet eligibility requirements. Participants must also be willing to meet with a case manager for initial program eligibility and to be recertified for eligibility every three months.

Ms. Ryan went on to discuss the HPRP homeless criteria which requires that one of five criteria must be met in order to be eligible for support under the program.

She then reported on the timeline for key activities, and how the program has performed since its inception October 1, 2009 through four months ending January 31, 2010. To date there have been 29 applicants, 9 programs have been funded, and there has been statewide coverage. There are complex reporting requirements into HMIS and into the State of NH, for further reporting into the Federal government. She spoke of some of the challenges of the program, and also that it is a temporary program lasting only 18 months.

Ms. Ryan then fielded a number of questions from the GNCOC members, including a question from E. Brady regarding the impact of receiving Section 8 housing vouchers, as the HPRP seems to be a stop gap measure. Ms. Ryan indicated there is a discussion at the federal level regarding the crisis surrounding affordable housing.

L. Christie stated that the Interagency Council on Homelessness' website has an interactive discussion going on about this issue and recommended members review it and get involved in the discussion. W. LeBlanc said she would email the link to members.

Ms. Ryan offered her email and phone number for those interested in further discussion, and her slide presentation was to be posted on the GNCOC website. She can be reached at 271-5142 or Maureen.u.ryan@dhhs.state.nh.us

Barbaros Dinler and Matthew Davis of Merrimack River Medical Centers (MRMC) presented information about the history of MRMC and its programs and locations. MRMC is an outpatient methadone treatment program for opiate addicted individuals. It is a Community Substance Abuse Center (www.csachelp.com). They currently operate 13 centers throughout NH (3), MA (8), ME (1) and CT (1). The closest center to the GNCOC is located at 323 Derry Road in Hudson, NH, a town which falls in the GNCOC catchment area. They also provided the group with copies of articles from the Journal of American Medical Association, and from the Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, purporting to be in support of methadone treatment, as well as brochures on their program offerings and site locations.

Matt Davis, Program Director indicated that they opened the NH facility in 1999 when it became legal in NH to provide methadone as a treatment for drug addiction. In 2001 they saw a major shift in how standards were set across the country for treatment centers of this kind. They also indicated that although heroin used to be the 'drug of choice', it is now other opiates such as Oxycotin, and Percocet. Access to treatment is often self referral, parents, law officials and DCYF. They indicate they can be a gateway to other service providers, as many of these patients have put other life needs on hold. Patients often lack such things as standard, primary medical care, dental care, housing, employment, etc.

Mr. Davis indicated that they are nationally accredited and fully licensed through all the necessary and appropriate state agencies. They accept Medicaid, however at this time cannot help uninsured persons who are not able to pay for the treatment services. The outpatient treatment is typically \$105 weekly. An average treatment period for a patient is 18 months.

Mr. Dinler and Mr. Davis fielded many questions from the GNCOC members. The phone number for the Hudson location is 595-3399.

Announcements:

Alderman L. Wilshire indicated that an RFP went out to hire a consultant to work on the Consolidated Plan. She indicated that she will keep the GNCOC informed of the progress as she learns of it.

There being no other announcements, the Chair reminded the members of the upcoming meetings detailed on the Agenda, and the meeting was then adjourned at 9:00AM.

Minutes prepared by Lori M. Piper, Merrimack County Savings Bank