

Greater Nashua Continuum of Care

General Community Meeting

Wednesday January 4, 2023

Minutes taken by Hannah Stohler, GNCOC Clerk

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair Wendy LeBlanc opened the meeting at 9:00 am.
- b. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Review of December 2022 Meeting Minutes

- a. Wendy LeBlanc presented the December 2022 GNCOC General Committee Meeting minutes. Mark Perkins made a motion to accept the minutes. Sandra Pratt seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Mike Apfelberg abstained from voting. The motion passed.

3. Governance Charter

- a. Wendy LeBlanc presented the updated Governance Charter for review. Mike Apfelberg made a motion to accept the updated Governance Charter. Scott Wellman seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

4. Monthly Roundtable Topic: OUTREACH

a. Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) from Harbor Care - presented by Kristen Kittredge

- i. The HOP Program is a program run by Harbor Care and funded by SAMHSA with a five-year grant from 2018 - 2023. It recently shifted under the Community Health Services Department and operates out of the 45 High Street Location.
- ii. Eligibility for the HOP program includes individuals experiencing homelessness, living within Hillsborough County and has substance use disorder.
- iii. Outreach activities include visiting shelters and day centers at food pantry/meal times, visiting encampments and doing street outreach, collaboration with GNCOC Outreach subcommittee.
- iv. General Outreach vs. Targeted Outreach - in addition to general outreach to all in the community, some clients will go for periods of time without communication with case manager, and so they deploy targeted outreach to go find particular individuals to re-engage them within the program.
- v. Once an individual becomes engaged in the program/becomes a client, they become part of the case management program. Case Management occurs either at 45 High Street or in the community. Appointments are generally weekly but minimum for program enrollment is once per month. Case management assists with obtaining permanent supportive housing, and provides wraparound/integrated services including connection with individual counseling, employment navigation, etc.
- vi. Alderman Tom Lopez asked whether nicotine was still considered as a substance for the substance use disorder criteria for HOP Program eligibility. Kristen said yes, technically true per SAMHSA, but they assess all factors during the eligibility screening.

b. Supportive Services Veterans and Families (SSVF) Program from Harbor Care - presented by Evan Schneider

- i. Evan Schneider is the Outreach Coordinator for the SSVF program at Harbor Care.
 - ii. SSVF is designed to help any veteran with 24 hours or more of active duty that is experiencing economic hardship, homeless, or in a housing crisis throughout the state of NH.
 - iii. Their fundamental program is Housing First. They offer a form of case management that is specifically geared towards supporting veterans in finding housing. They develop "micro contacts" with landlords; by developing a continuous flow of information to landlords via case managers/SSVF staff they are able to identify permanent housing solutions for homeless veterans.
 - iv. One of the tools they use is a *Shallow Subsidy*. We know rent is increasing drastically, and many veterans have either little income or are on a fixed income (SSDI/pension/etc.). If a veteran is averaging \$1032 a month, SSVF can put them into the Shallow Subsidy program which pays up to 50% of their rent for two years. They currently have two veterans who have been successfully integrated into the shallow subsidy program in Nashua and one veteran in Hollis. Throughout the state of NH they have 20 people on this program; it is effective.
 - v. They focus on Veteran Choice; veterans often choose different lifestyle options, so they focus on what type of housing they can put them in that is safe, permanent and secure. They partner with Grant per Diem housing through Harbor Care and have locations in Nashua, Manchester, Plymouth, and Tilton, where they can provide transitional housing for veterans for up to two years.
 - vi. They work with people who are experiencing both an imminent housing crisis and "couch surfing". They provide ancillary services through case management, including clothing and furniture.
 - vii. The biggest way we can collaborate with the SSVF program is to share any landlord connections we may have.
 - viii. Their outreach efforts are primarily in Nashua and focused on sharing information at meetings (like GNCOG), rail trail outreach and connection to resources. They also share promotional materials across the state, and visit the missions and shelters as frequently as possible.
- c. Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter (NSKS) Outreach Program - presented by Denise Jackson**
- i. NSKS Outreach provides tents, sleeping bags, and other essentials. They drive around and find those living outdoors, or also welcome those who enter into NSKS. They provide appropriate referrals to other agencies, including to Harbor Care if they have a housing voucher or CAP. They recently followed a family who left shelter to a tent, helped them secure CAP money and now they are in an apartment.
 - ii. NSKS Outreach includes basic outreach to where they know individuals are living, and answering the Coordinated Entry Line. Denise is the person primarily answering the Coordinated Entry line, with support from Paul (Family Promise volunteer) on Fridays.
- d. SSANA (Syringe Services Alliance of the Nashua Area) from Revive Recovery - Presented by Jessica Carter**

- i. SSANA is a program run out of Revive's Nashua location at 263 Main Street, but since this location is within 1000 feet of a drug free school zone, they do outreach in the community instead.
 - ii. SSANA is focused on Comprehensive Harm Reduction, which provides community members with supplies to use safely. They do not condone drug use but provide people with supplies for safe usage and connection for if they decide they want recovery.
 - iii. SSANA has been around since 2018 and collaborates with The Doorway and the Nashua Health Department.
 - iv. In April of last year, SSANA extended to include meth pipes, crack pipe, fentanyl testing kits, safer boofing kits, and other safer snorting kits. They provide overdose trainings and naloxone.
 - v. They used to provide services on Temple Street, but it was a congested location which made confidential conversations difficult and challenging to "meet people where they're at". They now are providing services in the Library parking lot which provides more privacy and safety for clients, and increases connection. Jessica shared an example of this - through individuals using the SSANA program, they recently learned of a new "purple" meth that has fentanyl in it, and had the opportunity to spread this to other SSANA participants and provide fentanyl testing strips.
 - vi. In September they switched from a "service" to an "exchange", meaning in order to receive more supplies you have to return what you used. They recently had a 117% return rate for syringes! They also organize community clean-ups and collaborate with Nashua PD for encampments containing their supplies - Revive is happy to clean these up.
 - vii. SSANA operates five days a week in the Nashua Library parking lot. Hours are Monday 10 - 12, Tuesday - Friday 2-4. The phone number for more information is: 978-743-9636.
 - viii. A meeting attendee asked Jessica how many people died of overdose in Nashua in 2023? Jessica deferred to NPD for specifics, but says every week they speak to individuals who state they reversed an overdose using Naloxone/Narcan received from SSANA so that is a positive. NPD officers in attendance stated that they don't have an official number but they are responding to an average of 4-8 calls per month for overdose. The number of overdose deaths are down but the number of overdoses are up, which speaks to both the availability/use of Narcan but also the increased strength of the drugs. Sue Mead stated that the Mayor's Opioid Task Force the official number on overdoses and directed attendees to the city's website for more official information.
- e. The Projects to Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Program from Greater Nashua Mental Health Program - Presented by Sue Mead**
- i. The PATH Program engages people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless due to mental illness or substance use. They aim to help people get into recommended treatment. Sue also provides education to providers.
 - ii. Referral sources for PATH include families/loved-ones, homeless outreach teams, NH State Hospital or other designated receiving facilities, Adult Protective Services, SNMHC Behavioral Health, St. Joseph's Hospital, NAMI,

- 211, Existing Clients, Police, City Welfare, Different City Departments, Churches, and more. PATH works across Nashua and 10 surrounding towns.
- iii. PATH develops relationships through working with shelter programs, referrals from existing and formal clients, the GNCOC, police, jails, and through the courts- judges, prosecutors, public defenders, clerks and more.
 - iv. PATH is part of the city's Encampment Meeting, which works with DPW, Fire, Police, Welfare, Public Health, Environmental Health, and Outreach workers.
 - v. In 1998, GNMH launched the Legal Liaison committee which has created our area Mental Health/Drug Court. It expanded drastically when Judge Leary took over and they have successfully diverted so many people from jail that they now have a liaison in both Nashua and Manchester court. Sue Mead facilitates this quarterly meeting with judges, prosecutors, and public defenders in service to those with severe and persistent mental illnesses.
 - vi. PATH engages with individuals where they feel comfortable - in the GNMH Offices, the woods, a friend's home, a coffee shop, the sidewalk, roof top, hospital, or home. They assess a person's needs, listen non-judgmentally, assess for safety, ask "how that's working for you?", and offer reassurance and information/choices.
 - vii. Sue shared the names of some of her success stories, and is proud that there are more names than she could fit on the slide. She also shared the Chinese Symbol for "CRISIS" is a mix of the words "danger" and "opportunity"; while outreach work finds many in crisis and danger, there is always an opportunity for change when something isn't working.
 - viii. Sue stated that awareness of community resources is key in outreach work, so GNCOC is important way for us to connect.
 - ix. Sue does Involuntary Emergency Admissions (IEAs) for those in risk of their own safety. Those individuals are put on a conditional discharge where they are released under certain conditions that if broken are revoked and the individual is sent back to the hospital. We currently have about 100 people on conditional discharges. GMNH Mobile Crisis teams can go into jails and do IEAs to help people get into psychiatric treatment.
 - x. In 1975 we had 2500 mental health beds in the state of NH, we now have 150. It is very difficult for emergency departments to support individuals in mental health crisis, which is frustrating for mental health outreach workers.
 - xi. Mandy Reagan stated that we are seeing an increase in eligibility for PATH's program/ an increased need for individuals in mental health crisis. PATH grant is capped and we continue to receive the same amount of funding despite the increased need and numbers served. Mandy urges us to advocate for increased funding for our programs.
 - xii. Tom Lopez and Donna Marceau both shared that Nashua Transit System are an invaluable resource for outreach; the bus drivers are often asked where to go for resources, so would be useful to invest training in them.

5. Point In Time (PIT) Count

- a. Sue Mead shared history of PIT Count; started in California. It is the one day of the year that counts the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness across the country. Outreach groups also go out throughout the year to count seasonally.

- b. The 2023 PIT Count is on January 25. We will do it on Thursday January 26 so that we count those who were homeless on January 25. There are two shifts from 9 am - 12 pm and 1 pm - 4 pm that volunteers can sign up for. We currently have 11 volunteers signed up, and need more to sign up (last year we had 40). Volunteers will meet at 5 Pine Street Extension and will be paired in groups of 4. United Way provided 90+ bags with hand warmers and other items so that you have something to give to individuals you are recording. Discussion was had about making posters to incentivize willingness to be counted.
- c. There is a training on January 10 for those who are going to participate which will cover "Dos and Don'ts". Training is mandatory for those who are participating. Ashley Jackson will send the training information out via the GNCOC Listserv.
- d. Chertina and Robyn from ICA shared that there will be a non-HMIS training on January 10 from 1 pm - 2 pm for GNCOC agencies who do not enter into HMIS, which will cover using the google form to enter PIT Count Data. There will be a separate training on January 24 for HMIS users from 9:30 - 11 for anyone who enters into HMIS. ICA will pull the PIT reports for everyone who enters into HMIS but will ensure that people have accurate data in beforehand. Disability and Households are the most common errors on these reports, so if anyone wants support reviewing current data to fix errors please reach out prior to the PIT. This information will be in the coming newsletter and Wendy will forward it out separately as well. Note that adjusting data for the date of the PIT Count after the fact will impact our long-term data. ICA looks at all data, deduplicates it and then sends it to HUD. ICA will hold office hours for anyone who needs help. If you have any questions before, please reach out so you are not stuck cleaning up data on the day of the PIT Count. ICA will also hold Office Hours on January 31, and you can create individual appointments using ICA calendar links found in the newsletter.
- e. Wendy LeBlanc explained to all attendees that the PIT is a HUD Requirement; some of NH state funding is impacted by how many people are counted. It's not ideal that it occurs in January, but it is how it works. We need all to participate!
- f. Scott Wellman asked Jennifer Rogers from Amerihealth if they would be able to provide volunteers to support the PIT Count. He is asking Healthy Families, and United Way will look for volunteers as well.

6. Agency Capacity

- a. Shelters -
 - i. NSKS - not taking more individuals until they move into Spring Street. This morning had space for 1 female, 4 males, no families. Denise is unsure of the current census.
 - ii. Rescue Mission has 7 beds available for men.
 - iii. Hope Center has 8 beds available for women.
- b. Transitional Housing
 - i. Front Door is full.
 - ii. Marguerite's Place is full.
 - iii. Family Promise is full.
 - iv. Cynthia Day Family Center has two open beds for pregnant and parenting women with SUD.
- c. Rapid Rehousing
 - i. No updates.
- d. Outreach

i. See above!!

7. Other Announcements

- a. Donna Marceau thanked everyone who wrote letters in support of expanding the bus from Nashua to Milford, and specifically thanked Jennifer from AmeriHealth, Stepping Stones, and Sandra from the Brazilian Center. The next meeting of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission is on Thursday January 26 at 10 am. Please attend and share your ideas for better transportation in this area!
- b. Don from the Bike Co-op thanked Donna for her support. He stated that the Bike Co-op has provided over 2500 bikes, with more than 75% going to adults using them for transportation. They started with 5 volunteers and now have 46. In collaboration with Donna, they are now sending bikes to Claremont, Newport, and Conway as well. Those cities are working on starting their own programs!
- c. Jessica Carter from Revive Recovery shared on behalf of Tom Lopez and the Employment Committee that their next meeting will be Tuesday January 10 at 9 am at the Nashua Library.
- d. Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager reminded that Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Grants are due next Friday January 13 at 5 pm and can be found on the city website.
- e. Danielle Sylvester introduced herself as the new Outreach specialist for Cynthia Day Family Center (CDFC). She announced that they will now be providing case management for children involved with CDFC, whether they are at CDFC, in foster care, or too old to CDFC. She will be reaching out to all agencies to do outreach.
- f. Mike Apfelberg from United Way of Greater Nashua invited anyone who would like to be involved in the Youth Homelessness subcommittee to join tomorrow morning 1/5/2023 at 9 am on zoom and to email him for the link. He also reminded everyone to update their information on 211 and gave everyone a standing invitation to join him on his radio show this year!
- g. Wendy LeBlanc announced that next month's meeting will focus on youth services and asked anyone providing youth specific services to reach out to Wendy/Ashley.

8. Adjournment

- a. Wendy LeBlanc adjourned the meeting at 10:13 am.