

**Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
Community Engagement and Supports Subcommittee
Housing Workgroup
February 6, 2023, Approved**

Attendees:

Emily Birckhead, Ashli Cottrell, Danny Hale, Bob Hansen (chair), Deb Koester, Joey McComas, Gwynn McGee, Jay Phillips, Beverly Sharp, Nick Stuchell, Kristin Tiedeman, Rachel Thaxton

Opening:

Bob Hansen provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Community Engagement and Supports Subcommittee Housing Workgroup. The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, February 6, 2024 and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve January meeting minutes. Jay made the motion for approval and Emily seconded the motion. The objective of this meeting was to discuss 2024 implementation planning.

Agenda Items:

Updates on the Governor's Council and Community Engagement and Supports Subcommittee

- Rachel announced a full council meeting scheduled for the third Wednesday of March, from 3 to 5 pm, which will be conducted in a hybrid format open to everyone. The agenda is to hopefully get the 2024 plan approved, now in its final approval stages by Secretaries Persily and Young. The plan is pending further instructions from the governor's office, although the governor's office has already reviewed the plan's goals and strategies. The subcommittees are expected to proceed with the implementation activities for 2024 as planned.
- Additionally, Rachel mentioned the formation of a new youth subcommittee. Deb Koester will soon be contacting members from each subcommittee to participate.

2024 Implementation Planning

Goal 1

- Strategy 1, KPI 1/KPI 2: Jay, Matt, and Bob have initially provided recommendations concerning funding but haven't progressed in the last 2-3 months after sharing their initial thoughts with the committee. These recommendations will be redistributed for further review. Emily, having

discussed with Medicaid to understand their strategy better, proposed that the team behind the funding survey could enhance these recommendations, considering Medicaid waiver approvals, HUD funding, and the workgroup's efforts. Bob suggested gathering the subgroup again before the next meeting, including Emily, to clarify their direction.

- Strategy 1, KPI 4: Bob highlighted the necessity to define how to assess the need for recovery housing capacity. Nick recommended that this assessment should be regional, identifying areas lacking in recovery housing to address community needs. Bob proposed consulting with state agencies to ascertain this need.
- Strategy 1, KPI 3: Bev pointed out the main driving force behind this KPI being the extensive waitlists and insufficient beds, especially for specialized populations, as highlighted during town hall meetings. She emphasized the importance of acknowledging these statewide needs before expanding capacity. Emily mentioned the existence of a map detailing population density, overdose rates, and housing types, and reported they will be adding a waitlist for referrals. This, along with guidance documents from the ODCP office on ancillary services, provides a foundational framework for addressing these issues.
- Strategy 1, KPI 5/KPI 6: Danny introduced the CAST system from SAMHSA as a tool for understanding community needs through data analysis.
- Strategy 2, KPI 1: Bob tasked Ashli, Rachel, and Gwynn with exploring funding options for the second annual conference for recovery residence operators and staff. Emily recalled the previous year's conference, which was combined with the PEER conference, mentioning the costs covered for speakers (approximately \$25,000) and the venue provided at no cost. Bob emphasized the need for budget clarity by April to facilitate planning for the event in the fall.

HuD Funding and Implications for 2024

- Emily mentioned that an annual allocation of \$500,000 for vouchers has been approved, intended for a pilot program to distribute funds, which are designated solely for covering rent and utility expenses. This pilot aligns with the DHHR's daily rates and mirrors Medicaid's approach to reimbursements, offering \$20 per day for up to 45 days per individual, contingent upon the delivery of specified outcomes. A meeting for existing operators was held on Friday to discuss the rollout. Upon the completion of the pilot, organizations will be briefed on the necessary criteria for participation.

Legislative Impacts on Housing

- Bob reported a high turnout at the recovery advocacy event held yesterday.
- Emily discussed three legislative bills related to recovery residences currently under consideration: SB 165 (specific to Cabell County) and SB 301 (applicable statewide) aim to ensure recovery homes adhere to landlord-tenant laws, addressing issues such as recurrent substance use, violence, and sexual misconduct. These bills require organizations to have agreements with residents outlining acceptable behavior, violations of which could lead to expulsion.

- There is also a proposal for a licensing requirement in addition to existing certification for recovery housing. This would enable the inclusion of services unrelated to recovery, potentially transforming recovery residences into treatment providers limited to offering residential treatment only, as highlighted by Nick.
- Another legislative proposal considered was to compile a list of all recovery homes compliant with fair housing standards to be included in the secretary of state's listings for sober living environments. However, this was abandoned due to concerns over website accessibility. Instead, a mandatory registration with OFLAC has been introduced, which comes with a significant entry fee of \$1,000.

Addressing Transitional Living

- Bob inquired whether the topic of transitional housing for individuals exiting the correctional system warrants future discussion. Bev responded, mentioning her numerous discussions with legislators on the importance of including transitional living as a key component in the continuum of services, providing a critical support structure for those released.
- Jay emphasized the importance of addressing the intersectionality between individuals transitioning out of the criminal justice system and those dealing with SUD.

Housing and FY2025 Plans for SOR Funding

- Gwynn mentioned that the SOR application for 2025 has yet to be published, predicting a possible release in March. She pointed out that her office is currently exceeding its budget, leading to efforts to reduce funding for grants that have shown underspending in the past year, with the aim of reallocating those funds to other grants.

Adjournment:

Bob expressed his gratitude to all the workgroup members for their participation. The work group is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, March 5th at 1 PM.